

A MESSAGE FOR ALL SOULS

SLICER



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Meditations
A Message for All Souls

In Memoriam

THOMAS ROBERTS SLICER, A. M., D. D.

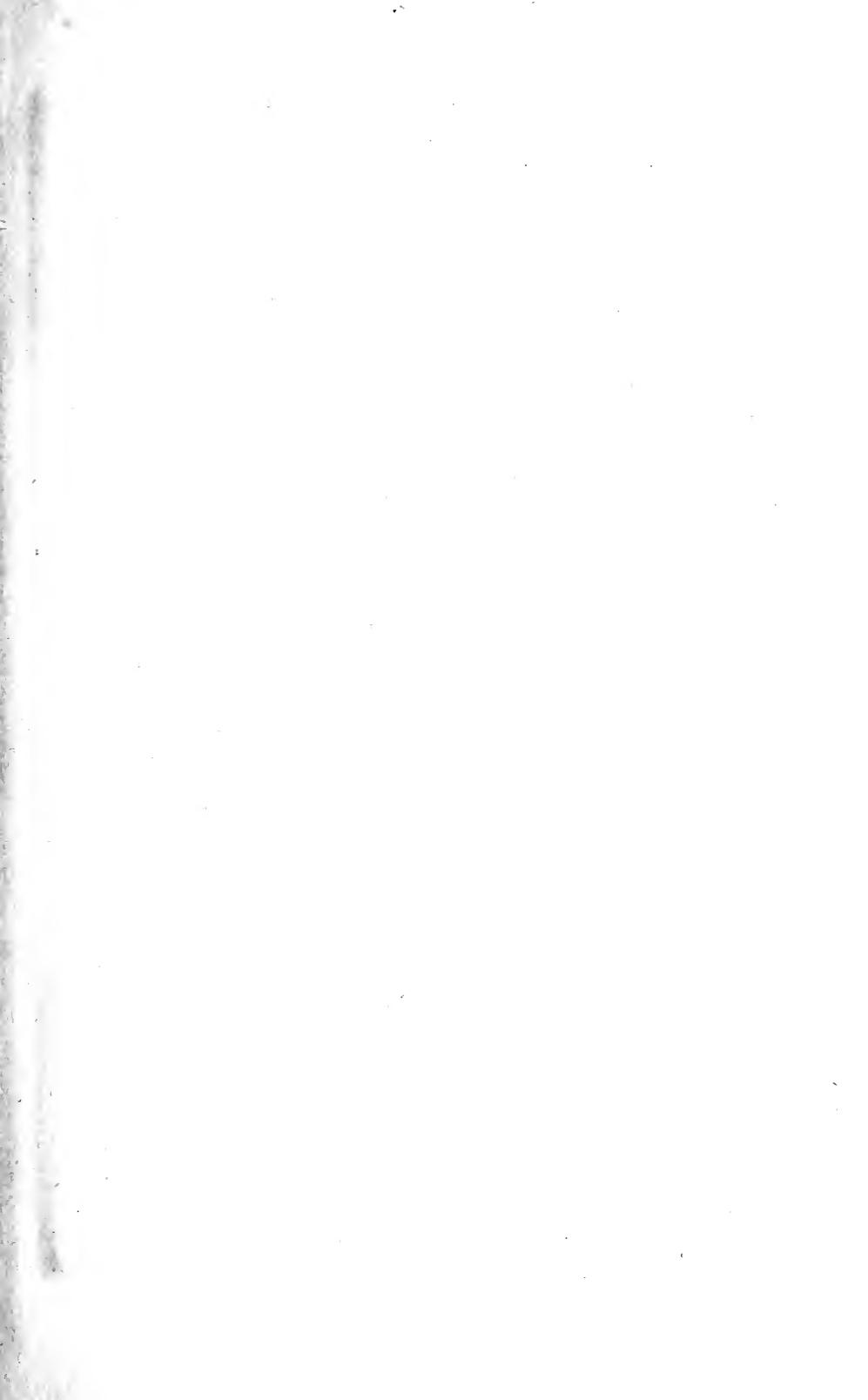
1847-1916

A MAN, VIRILE AND PEACEABLE;

A FRIEND, LOYAL AND INSPIRING;

A CITIZEN, DEVOTED TO ALL HIGH CAUSES;

A MINISTER, CONSECRATED TO "THE MINISTRY
... OF THE LORD JESUS, TO TESTIFY THE
GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD."





Karstau

*James Alvays
Thomas R. Allen*

MEDITATIONS

A MESSAGE FOR ALL SOULS

BY

THOMAS ROBERTS SLICER, A. M., D. D.

Author of

"THE GREAT AFFIRMATIONS OF RELIGION," "THE
POWER AND PROMISE OF THE LIBERAL FAITH,"

"THE WAY TO HAPPINESS," ETC.

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FOREWORD

THE note which runs through Doctor Slicer's "Meditations" is that of expectancy of good from God, God's universe, and God's creature Man. He believes with all his heart that God's very essence is love, that the universe abounds in beauty and loveliness which Man is capable of appreciating and responding to, and that in human nature itself there are large elements of gentleness, dignity, and sympathetic loyalty which since history began have been winning successive victories over inherited animal propensities, barbaric vices, and social and industrial wrong-doings. He believes in the gradual triumph of good over evil in human society, and in building up individual character by making the practice of good exclude even the thought of evil.

Doctor Slicer's "Message for All Souls" is one of cheer and hope—"Ever upward God's creations move, ever upward God's progressions tend. 'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.'" It is a message appropriate to the Church of All Souls, and to the three generations of forward-looking people who have worshipped there.

Thousands of souls in other churches would welcome the message, if it should reach them. The whole Christian World needs it.

Charles H. Slicer

Cambridge, Mass.,
30 October, 1919.

PRAYERS

| | PAGE |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| PRAYER OF ADORATION | 1 |
| PRAYER OF THANKFULNESS | 29 |
| PRAYER FOR SELF-SURRENDER | 43 |
| PRAYER FOR DIVINE GUIDANCE | 59 |
| PRAYER FOR INSPIRATION | 81 |
| PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING | 113 |
| PRAYER FOR COMMUNION | 143 |
| PRAYER FOR FAITHFULNESS | 177 |
| PRAYER FOR PURIFIED DESIRES | 203 |

MEDITATIONS

| | PAGE |
|----------------------------------|------|
| FOREWORD | v |
| THE WAY OF LIFE | 3 |
| THE CHURCH | 31 |
| THE POWER OF FAITH | 44 |
| THE LARGER VISION | 61 |
| THE GROWTH OF THE SOUL | 83 |
| LIFE'S PURPOSE | 115 |
| RELIGION | 145 |
| JESUS OF NAZARETH | 179 |
| IMMORTALITY | 205 |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | 221 |

The Way of Life

The test of our being Christian is in the ratio of our reproduction. The test of our development is what we can convey of the Christ-life.

PRAYER OF ADORATION

O CONSTANT GOD, we adore the faithfulness of the Creator, but more do we prostrate ourselves in loving adoration before the goodness of the Father. In this hour make all Thy goodness to pass before us, that we shall believe that holiness is beauty and righteousness is power. Make, to our attentive souls, love and law come full circle together, that we may believe and trust whilst we adore and worship. Bring Thy knowledge to the souls of men. We thank Thee for the way that we have been led: it was Thy path, and we have been safe. When we could not see the way it was Thy path and we could feel Thy guidance, and in what our distressed spirits sought too eagerly we have come to know Thy quiet and Thy peace. O Thou who keepest in perfect peace those that trust in Thee, may we seek to trust more than we seek to be at peace, and so fulfilling the great divine condition know the blessedness of those that wait patiently for Thee while they rest in Thee.

Forgive our sins, heal the hurt of our souls, help us wherein we are ashamed, and in all things in which we have failed, lay Thy hands over the feebleness of our own and hold us to the task. May Thy strength appear in our weakness, and the strength of God marshal us in the way we do not know. We remember before Thee those that are in deep affliction, though Thou needest not to be

reminded. Console them with those consolations that come to a quiet heart that waits for Thy word; into their darkness shine with Thy light, and in their confusion bring them an ordered mind; and where they must close their eyes, then carry Thou them and their burden, O Thou that art the constant sustainer of the world.

Let all the nations of the earth find their peace in Thee. Let the nations that mourn know that Thou rulest above all rulers, and that Thou art above all human authority; and for our own dear nation, for our own people for whom Thou hast appointed a great task, we pray Thee grant obedience to law and reverence for right and the quietness that is willing patiently to do Thy will. Let all wisdom be given to those that rule and those that obey, and let the peace that comes from fidelity possess them. We leave our problems to Thee. Thou knowest the answer to them all, for the end from the beginning Thou hast seen. Let us behold Thee, and all our solitudes shall be assuaged. Amen.

A Knowledge of Good the Greatest Safeguard

A KNOWLEDGE of the good is an equipment for life. This is a fact at the very foundation of all wholesome living. No knowledge of evil so furnishes a man by acquaintance with it to avoid it, as a knowledge of the good teaches him the danger of the wrong. As a child born and bred in the high hills and open country pines away in the close city streets, is oppressed by their impure air, so a soul trained to discover the good detects evil as quickly as those best acquainted with wrong-doing, with this advantage: that the evil is known on sight and hated as soon as known. This cannot be too much emphasized, — the habit of finding in all things *the good*.

Unwholesome Anxieties

WE mourn at the sight of a young, strong nature sapped by dissipation. We mourn that fever has taken the place of strength, and the delirium of wild life has made impossible the sober thinking which grave destinies demand. Is not the case somewhat similar, when instead of the dissipation of unworthy pleasures we substitute the fever of unwholesome anxieties? Do not these absorb the force we need for the very tasks before which love stands alarmed? Shall our eyes be dim with tears when their clearest vision is needed to lead aright our own lives and others by ways that are safe to ends that are blessed? Before we reach the heights of religious trust, a lower philosophy cautions us to dismiss, as

far as we may, all hindering, entangling anxieties, that we may be at our best, whose best seems all inadequate for that great work, the building up of life that may shelter other lives.

Our Responsibility to the God Who made Us

WE have a superficial way of saying that we are “divinely derived” and then we dismiss the statement. You cannot be in any way derived without the responsibility of the derivation attaching to the thing so derived. You cut down an oak and a willow and wait for them to burn in two contiguous fireplaces. The willow has been fed on water and it does not burn well. The oak has been fed on centuries of compacted life and it kindles slowly until it is one coal. So it is not enough to say “God is our Father,” and then dismiss it; but it is the ground of confidence that being so derived we cannot be taken out from the life of God; that our responsibility is partly due to our divine origin, and our confidence reverts where our responsibility is charged.

Two Vexed Questions

THERE are two things that disturb us. The first is “What am I to do?” The other is, “What is to become of me?” And between these two affrights, all their life long some souls have been held in bondage. What am I to do? How can I work out my career? How am I to get on? What a useless

question for a human soul! There is nothing to be done in this world about getting on, except to be fit to get on. Any human being who knows any one thing well that anybody else wants to know, has an audience and a purpose, and an opportunity. Any human being that can do anything well that anybody wants to have done, is sure of occupation.

A Real Relationship

GOD is too beautiful for any human description to depict, too real not to compass all the varying expressions of our varying experience. It does not much matter what the ultimate is, so it be real and so the relation be felt. I stand upon a great bridge that spans the river, and the fog shuts down and hides both piers. But I know the road-bed firm beneath me, and that it would not be so firm if not bound at either end. The traffic makes it tremble, but not with any premonition that it will fall. I can hear the strain of its cords, and the chafing of its joints; but the relation between the two shores is under me and firm, and it is mine; and as I step from one position to another, that relation remains firm. I may apprehend the pier upon the other side, and call it God: but all I ask is that it shall be good sailing or good going, and that the relation shall be firm, explicit, real.

The Soul's Mart of Exchange

WE take ideas upon the mart of exchange. The soul sits central, and the caravans come in through the gates of sense. The eye gate, the ear gate, all these gates of sense open outward to the world; from over the wide world, the marching caravans, bearing the traffic of the world's ideas, come in. These five great gates of sense are swinging forever, and the great burden of the world is rolling through, and the central soul sits and assort its wares and chooses what it will. It is doing a thing that is of the vastest importance. It is selecting, and assimilating and digesting the ideal world into itself. If it is only concerned with the worth of the thing that is given to it in terms of price, then it is selling forever what is ideal for what is carnal.

The Price of Liberty

THE very things which cause a real struggle in the individual man produce society. The "law of being" is that it shall be creative. The conflicts of nature, the power of love, the appeals of sin, the sense of moral values, the thralldom of circumstance, — out of these grow the aggregate we call society. Its reality is a tragedy and an opportunity. Its destiny is struggle. It is the history of the escape from barbarism. It is the price of liberty. Its self-control is the guarantee of its emancipation. There really is no room for idle lookers-on where this tragedy is going forward. Its reality claims the earnest souls

for struggle, and rebukes the idle souls for their sloth. It cannot be waved aside; it cannot be accounted for by set phrases about the "steady gain of man." One Calvary is not enough. There should be a perpetual incarnation and an unceasing atonement.

Free to Seek the Highest

CHANNING spoke for the large interpretation of human liberty in the interest of a deeper religious life when he said: "The right to which we are bound is not insulated, but connected, and one with the infinite rectitude and with all the virtue of all being. In following it, we promote the health of the universe."

A great teacher of the present time has said: "The paramount aim of religion is to seek with all our might the highest welfare of the world we live in, and the realization of its ideal greatness and nobleness and blessedness." This is but an elaboration of the golden rule announced by Kant: "Act as though the principle by which you act were by your will to become a universal law of nature." Religion is not lame nor maimed nor feeble. It stands erect and exhorts to freedom with these words:

"All things are thine estate, yet must
Thou first display the title deeds,
And sue the world. Be strong and trust
High instincts more than all the creeds."

Man's God and Nature's God are One

NO longer is it true that the earthquake shakes and the storm shivers through the air while God is only in the "still, small voice"; for the earthquake brings its message that the planet is cooling, and making itself more habitable in every part for the dwelling of men; and the storm rages not with fierceness, but with that benignity which clears the atmosphere and alters the currents of the winds and the tides of the sea. The "still, small voice" is heard through it all, and all is well. Man listens for the voices within; and all these that *were* the jarring notes of nature find rhythm and beauty and harmony in a world of perfect order that speaks by every voice to the man who seeks to know the will of God.

*"We know that all things work together
for good to them that love God"*

WHAT any human soul knows, some other human soul may find out. If to any human soul a great truth is true, it behooves us to find the path by which he walked, to discover the springs of his motives, and if possible, to verify in the terms of our experience that thing which he has found true. St. Paul says, "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." "I am persuaded" — that showed argument:

that showed deliberation. If he was persuaded and you are not, find out why it is that life's experience in you is other than it was in him.

"We know that to them that love God all things work together for good." In our interpretation of this, it is our habit to cast the whole contract on God and not take our share of the obligation. The soul that thinks itself devout and religious has really a desire to be good and to have things work out for its good. The average such soul waits to be moved by the love of God, waits to be led by the providence of God, waits for the answer of the prayers itself might have answered long ago, and throws the whole responsibility of this contract on God. And yet it takes God *and* man to make a loaf of bread. It takes God *and* Stradivarius to make his violin. It takes God *and* man to change weeds into flowers or weeds into medical simples. It takes God *and* man to rebuke disease and to weed out and banish the Black Death.

"We know that to them that love God all things work together for good." Does this mean that everything comes out right to the man who loves God or does it mean that to the right-minded everything moves to right ends? The first proposition presupposes a love of God that is to be recognized, and the second a love of God that recognizes. The second looks abroad; it is the attitude of the expectant soul, placing its ordered mind in relation to an ordered world. There is no jarring note struck on the anvil of the world. It is a rhythmic beat of ham-

mers, from the tiniest beat of the wing of an ephemeral insect to the pulsation of worlds in their flight. There is no stroke out of tune. "They work *together* for good."

I have come upon many people who have ripened by the "working together" of the influences of their lives. They began crude, rude, cross, immature, with jangling motives, inharmonious desires, contending forces of the inner life, to be subdued and put into shape by the battle of life. And when you found them after a little while, they had simply been put into the world in which things work together for good, and the crude had turned to refinement, and the rudeness to perfect courtesy and the man is the angel that was in the block, made beautiful by the stroke and pressure of experience of life. All things work together for good to the docile soul. The great trouble with us is that we resist at every point. We insist that instead of being mellow, we shall be hard; instead of being sweet, we shall be acid and have our own way; instead of being plastic, we shall be stubborn; so that nothing can work for our good, for we do not really love God.

The Virtues Many, the Vices Few

THE human mind is so constituted that in an ordered world to the end of time, though there must be the same old hideous wrongs, the vices are the fewest, and have few variations. From the days of Cain who slew his brother and of Jacob who cheated

his brother, and of David who coveted his neighbor's wife, and of Solomon whose wisdom was not self-regulative, and of Judas who betrayed for money the trust put in him by a friend, the same old column of unspeakable wrongs appears. Meantime the crop of virtues has multiplied. There are manifold refinements of virtues, delicacies of mind, touches never known to the ancient world; new designs of marvellous benevolence. The music of life is multiplied, and the discords only are the same. That is the contribution made by the natural world to our confidence that things work together for good in this world of God.

The Ordered Mind Matches the Ordered World

AN ordered mind has relation to an ordered world; and in that mind, the highest function has to do with its cause whose insufficient name is God. When one stands out as some Arab may have stood yesterday and cried, "O Allah, cover me with Thy shadow in the day when there is no shade but Thy shadow," the gravitation of the mind has manifested itself, the cohesion of the mind has manifested itself, the ordered procession of a soul to its source has manifested itself, the *abandon* of the Moslem to his faith in One has manifested itself, and the ordered mind matches the ordered world and they work together for good. Do the comets come when they are expected? It is by the law that was calculated that they come. Do the spheres choir in their courses, singing on their way?

It is because they are in a world of beauty and of music, and they go the path of their appointment.

The world is so ordered that when to Asa Gray was brought a flower from some tropical country, with the neck of the flower so long the honey cell was some eleven inches below the opening of the flower, he immediately said: "Where that flower grew there is a moth, or some insect with proboscis eleven inches long that must find that honey cell, and so distribute the pollen from its wings and back upon the other sex that belongs to this flower." And it was said, "Such a moth has never been seen." The next invoice of specimens from an exploring expedition brought the moth with its long, curled-up proboscis longer than that of the Sphinx moth. It was found where the flower grew. Asa Gray was a prophet because he knew that God made nothing in vain in the world, that He never trifled with a flower. He understood, as Tennyson understood, that

"Not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire
Or but subserves another's gain."

In the foundation of things there shall be included all kinds of cause that we perceive as effects in the world. For instance, you cannot have a living world from a dead cause. You cannot have an intelligent world from a dumb source. You cannot have a world of mind without any mother-mind from which it is born. You cannot have that supreme flower of human

life, Jesus of Nazareth, except by a process of incarnation, by which the active intelligence of the real being of God appeared in the flesh, according to the passage from John's Gospel, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." The philosophic atheist may say, "I live in a world of effects, but I will cut the connection between the effect and the cause and the world will go on just the same." But that would not be an ordered world; and that is not an ordered mind that so regards it.

The Sense of Purpose in every Scene of the Natural World

WE live in the world of effects; we are part of the effect. First among the effects, is unquestionably the "rule of mind." You stand before a Jacquard loom, and it seems as though it moved of itself. You watch the curious process of the weaving going on, and presently a little shuttle falls down into its place with a new line of color, and runs between the meshes, as though it had been sent by some intelligence that lay behind and out of sight. Hanging above the loom is the pattern of that thing which is to be, that is a picture in the mind that made it, as the loom itself is the product of a mind that made it. And so through the whole universe, you cannot conceive of accidents so regular, you cannot conceive of order without its being ordered. The sense of will, of design, of movement, of purpose, is in every scene of the natural world.

Inexorable Law can not be Evaded

WE have learned that in the universe there is no room for two beings who might divide the empire between them, — God and some diabolical antithesis of God. We have learned that no atonement can be invoked which can impute to a man a righteousness which is not his own; that no atonement can be conceived which would relieve a man of the effects of a sin that he had committed; and that just as truly as when you cut through the true skin you leave a scar, just so truly the thing done by the soul, in the soul, against the law of God, never is healed. There is no atonement that can take out of the world the evil thing that we have put into it: we have learned that and bow down penitent before inexorable law.

Uniting to Make the World Better

MEN can do business together who are on diametrically opposite sides politically and religiously. Why can they not save the world together, without reference to their political or religious party? I should say that the life of Jesus reproduced in the world is the one thing on which we might unite; to live His life again; to feel His temper and spirit; to love (for love in all the worlds must be better than hate) to love the world back into the heart of God. We can do that, and we are bound to do it if we mean to realize Christian unity. So we will offer our historic criticisms on historic grounds; our biblical crit-

icisms upon grounds biblical, our doctrinal criticisms upon grounds doctrinal, but when it comes to the heart of man and the character of the individual, we will unite in righteous work for the sake of making the world better, not requiring uniformity of opinion in order to have unity of fellowship.

Citizenship the Highest Function

THERE is no higher function than that of citizenship. Society is the divinest thing we have; and the business of him who knows the way is to lead in the paths of righteousness those of the social state who need his guidance. The difference between the citizen and the adventurer, between the man who desires gain and who desires to give, between the sane and steady worker for the common weal, and the invader of the commonwealth, lies in this; that the one desires to take out of the country all that he can get, and the other desires to put into the country all that he can give. It is the challenge to our Americanism to bestow ourselves upon the affairs of government, to find nothing ignoble that concerns the Nation, and to have a passion for righteousness that shall in one aspect take the name of patriotism, as in another, it takes the name of civic virtue.

Nationality is Personality

AN ordered herd can never be a commonwealth; for national life has common weal for its desire, co-

operation for its endeavor, patriotism for its creed, loyalty for its communion; and writes over the altars of its sacrifice, "Here we lay our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." The personality of national life forbids monarchy as its final form and stamps anarchy as its relentless foe: it is the merging of the individual in the *national person*. Nationality is personality. It speaks a language which all civilized peoples can understand. It denounces in terms of death those who are traitors to its own ideals, not simply because they have betrayed their trust but because they have exalted the individual will above the common good.

The Lover of His Kind

TAKE the man who believes profoundly in his fellows. He believes in the "essential dignity of human nature." He believes in "the sovereignty of the human mind." He believes in the capacity of human nature for all good. He does not believe in man as "ruined," but as incomplete: he believes that man rises by continual ascent in a way that discounts and contradicts the old doctrine of the "fall of man." Man never fell. He has been rising ever since the beginning. This man believes in his fellows. We call him a lover of his kind and he loves them so much that he is not particular that they shall be just his kind. He is an example of the exercise of faith in an object that is worthy of its bestowal.

The Essential Morality of the Universe

THE business world is built up, with all its defects, with all its want of commercial integrity, as we sometimes see it, — it is built up upon the abiding conviction that morality is an essential part of human life. Yesterday the business world did ninety-five per cent. of its work upon credit. If you were to call back the whole business of the world to a cash basis, because you disbelieved in common integrity, you would destroy the commerce of this country before the year was out. It is because human nature is essentially dependable; because the universe is essentially moral; because the vast majority of people are really honest, that the great mass of business in the world every day of the world's life is done upon a system of credit.

The common belief in the integrity of man must be carried through and applied to the universe at large. The universe is man's home. If a man is essentially honest, if he is essentially right, the universe must be of the same kind. I believe that the only solution of life is on the basis that the universe from core to rim, from center to circumference, is moral through and through. In school life, we learned the axiom: "A straight line is the shortest distance between two points." It is just as true in morals. "The whole cannot be greater than the sum of all its parts." It is just the same in morals. These axioms that are the foundation of geometry are also axiomatic in the moral world. Directness of intention, sincerity that is crystalline — these are

qualities a man must have in a universe he believes to be moral.

Proportioned Thinking

YOU cannot believe anything that is worth believing which has to do with character until you have purged your mind of all cant. Never say the thing that you do not believe. Never think the thing that you cannot summon before the bar of reason and adjudge its place and value. Take no attitude toward the great realities for another mind that you would not assume for yourself. Take no attitude for yourself that you would not be willing to be found in if God should call you that moment to your account. You say these are high qualities. They are not too lofty for a man to claim for himself. Proportioned thinking, giving to every phase of life and character its due proportion, is accompanied by crystalline sincerity.

The Keynote of Christianity

THIS is the keynote of Christianity—that it finds its ground of being in God. It is a divine impulse from the life of Jesus of Nazareth, the Hebrew, which finds its source in God's unity, its expansion in man's brotherhood, its inspiration in man's relation to God, and its mission in revealing the Father to His children who "ignorantly worship" Him. The Greek Aryan with his "gods many and lords many" was to find in the unity of God

the ultimate fact of his philosophy and the justification of his ethics. The conversion of the world to Christ was an effort to reduce the confusion of the Aryan Pantheon to unity of worship in the religion of Jesus. The Scriptures of the new faith were Jewish. The philosophy of life, at once simple and strong, was the conception of a Galilean.

The Ordered World the Procession of God's Life

IN the aspect of God as personal and immediate, the ordered world is the procession of His life. Law is the gradual assertion of that normal order in morals which finds its archetypal pattern in eternal justice. Sin is the attempt to establish in terms of will a contradiction to the will eternal. It can never be, and the pain and anguish are like ugliness; it is "dislocation from the life of God." They therefore are doing the will of God who declare against sickness and deformity and hideousness of all kinds; for the mind that has "thought the universe through" has thought it through in terms of beauty. They also are striving for the same end who declare against envy, and hatred, and lust.

Emancipation of Thought not Dangerous

THE emancipation of thought belongs to our errand. We are free to do our own thinking on our own terms to our own end. The answer to the question: "Is not that a dangerous process?" is that

there is no other function of human nature that is made dangerous by fit exercise. You use your muscles and they grow tough. You use the eye with good judgment and its sight improves; and the ear can be trained almost to the acuteness of a dog's hearing. Why should it be dangerous to think? The emancipation of thought is the only condition on which a man may find God. If he is not free, he will find the other man's God, and will be restless under the leading and feel that the God he finds is alien to his nature.

The Helps to Growth

PEOPLE whose faces have glowed with the sunset do not thereafter sit at northern windows to see it. It does not shine there, except by the vaguest and most indirect reflection and afterglow upon the sky. So when Jacob (to follow the folk-story of the Old Testament) was in direst need, he remembered the trip he made when he was fleeing before the face of his brother and came to the place that he had called "Bethel," where he had his vision and found "the house of God," and he said, "I will go again unto Bethel where my altar was at the first." This is a good plan. There is something even in the cold ashes of that altar, something in the old stones laid there, that brings the vision again which spontaneously there appeared. These memories are the helps to growth and there is a whole class of people that need them as they need food.

Baptism an Act of Consecration

THERE can be no regenerative quality in Baptism. You cannot make a clean heart by an application of water to head or body. There is, however, a sense of committal, an act of consecration, which the pure spirit of Jesus himself did not disdain. When they came to John for baptism He came also, and went down into the water and said: "It is becoming that we should fulfil all righteousness"; and there, among the confessing sinners, He received the rite which meant to them the repentance of sin, and to Him a delivery of Himself in consecration unto the work of God. So the act of baptism has a meaning. It is an act of consecration, and its regenerative help to growth comes by the act of the soul in the reception of it.

Seeking the Divine Atmosphere

ICAN sit in a stifling room and think of the crystal-line clearness that rests upon the mountain tops. But I am in the stifling room and all that I get out of it is a pained imagination of something I want and have not. In other words, to put myself into relation with the atmosphere, I must go where the clean air is. I must leave my crowded tenement if I can. I must bathe myself, immerse myself, plunge into the deeps of air, and have all the functions related to it. This is an exact illustration of what happens to the man who is walled up in his own selfish

claims and theories of what God could do for him if God were willing. He is in an asphyxiating selfishness, pressed upon by the murk and fog of his own near desires ; and he gets down and wrestles to make God willing to help him to have the clear atmosphere of the divine life, instead of leaving his own cabined life for the wide spaces of the life of God.

Our Unused Assets

IF religion is a natural function of the human soul ; if you cannot “get religion” in the old evangelistic phrase, but cannot by any possibility get rid of it ; if it flows with your blood ; if it pulsates in your heart ; if it quivers with the motion of the atoms of the brain ; if it is in the very tissues that go to make up your being, — if this is true, then it behooves you to find out the terms on which you can realize on it. Why should we have a lot of dead assets which we will never put into circulation in the traffic of the world ? We are like people who are land-poor, who have immense estates and cannot pay the taxes. This is the condition of the man who is living a purely material life. He is not realizing on his investment in any sense.

The Challenge of the Desert Places

MEN thought God had forgotten the Great American Desert that stretches for six hundred miles across this country, because He only made buffalo-

grass grow on it for a little while, together with a few short-lived flowers. And they said: "God hardly cares for the great herds that graze a little while and then move on." Then men found out that God wanted to prompt us to redeem the desert waste, to pour water over the desert, to make great irrigating canals. All that God meant by the desert was to challenge man to make it blossom and be fruitful; and when He was able to get men of intelligence and skill enough to make great irrigating canals, it was found good soil in which to grow anything the climate would support. Find out, then, some tract of human life that looks arid and desert and unfruitful and there be a worker together with God.

The Revealer of the Absolute

"NO man has seen God at any time" because no man has seen Ultimate Reality at any time. When the sun sinks through the denser air, you see the red disk. That is not the sun, it is the photosphere on our atmosphere. No man has seen any ultimate reality, but the business of life is to have the ultimate reality interpret itself in terms level to our need and within our capacity. God is an infinite number of things that I do not know; but what I want to know is what the words "good," "righteous," "loving," mean and what to be good and to be loving means in the ultimate reality. In Jesus we say we have the terms in which our human life measures the capacity of man

to know God. He was the revealer of God to man, standing as the expression of the absolute in terms of humanity.

Man has not "Fallen" but Risen

WE deny the theory of the "fall of man" because we find no proof of it in Nature. Think of this inverted pyramid, and the whole structure of the Christian religion resting on the conception of the total depravity of the race, a theory which cannot be maintained in the face of the elementary study of anthropology. Jesus talked to human beings as though they were capable of all good things. Take his conversation with the woman of Samaria. Here was a woman come to draw water out of an ancient well, a woman to whom the sacred things of life had become a trade, and the sanctities of the spirit, a commonplace. To this woman, so impure, Jesus spoke of the spirituality of worship, the fatherhood of God, the universality of religion. After reading that, can one believe in the depravity of human nature? How can we deal with the "fall of man" as fundamental to constructive theology? It is impossible.

Pride which Follows Achievement is Legitimate

THE criticism of one form of faith by another often has its root in denominational pride. I can understand anybody's being proud of what has

been achieved. We ride with Paul Revere because he dared, and stand with "the embattled farmers" at Lexington because they dared. We review the great periods of our national history, because something was done, something achieved. We take up the autobiography of Booker Washington and follow the boy from his almost unknown beginning until he becomes the most useful man of his race in America, because of what he did, what he accomplished. But why should anybody get excited about a table of statistics? Not numbers, nor institutions, nor popularity, nor fashionable adherents, nor anything else counts, but simply ability to swing the weapon and cut your way through.

The Necessity for Spiritual Conviction

A REALLY constructive theology cannot be satisfied with what is practically untrue under the light of modern criticism. What is traditionally true must be examined under the light of history; what is authoritatively true may be philosophically necessary; but it is still upon the plane of intellectual speculation and is not yet in the field of religion. There is a deep below all speculative reasoning which every man must reach in his personal thinking, in his spiritual convictions, if he is to be satisfied. His truth must be theologically true if it may, philosophically true if it must, but *it must be spiritually efficient*. The theology that does not make you a better man or woman has not done anything for you.

Paul is quite right when he tells us that "knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up."

We Pay our own Penalties

WE stand by the order of Nature, and Nature does not allow us to put our sins on anybody else. You charge your sickness to the drainage; but you have to take your own medicine — you do not pour it down the drain. You say, "I was hurt by the blunder of the motorman"; but it is not the motorman's legs that are put in splints. We do our own bookkeeping and balance our debit and credit as the days go by. In the Old Testament we read: "I say unto you that all souls are mine. As the soul of the father, so the soul of the son is mine, and the soul that sinneth, it shall die." This is the teaching not of the Old Testament alone, but of the New Testament as well.

The Church

*The soul is artesian and the Church is the channel
for its flood.*

PRAYER OF THANKFULNESS

O GOD, we turn in this quiet hour and pray to be shut in with Thee, knowing this to be but an incident in all the day's doing and thinking, and feeling that it is a holy moment, that it may be made holy by the spirit's consecration, a consecration by divine communion, and that we shall go forth as those that have been refreshed, steadied, quieted, and strengthened with the touch of the divine hand, and that we shall be guarded anew for what we call our common duties; and that we shall find new inspiration in our ordinary tasks.

We thank Thee for the manifold mercies of Providence, — we offer Thee our unfeigned thanks, and the sacrifice of our praise. We claim our rights in Thee for what Thou dost for us, for when we have asked, Thou hast done more than we have asked. Thou hast remembered things that we had forgotten, and thought of things we would never have known; for Thou knowest us altogether. We were dust in Thy hand before our lives were formed; the breath we breathe is Thy breath; and since we belong to Thee, help us with the things of our common life.

O God, we thank Thee for every holy influence that made our childhood happy, for every divine inspiration that from other hearts reached our own. We thank Thee that we were taught to pray to Thee, wondering whether the eyes that looked

down into ours were looked through by the Father in Heaven. And we thank Thee for all the sweet influences of home, and the church, and the scripture, and the goodness of the world. We adore Thee this hour. Lead us we pray Thee now that we go alone, self-directed, lead us no less than in that early time.

Give us the power to love men and women into goodness, to be compassionate with a compassion like Thine own, to feel deeply the sorrows of the world; that the walls of life may be broken down and the light of sympathy flow forth.

Overshadow our land with Thy goodness; teach and strengthen the hands of those that rule, and give righteousness to those upon whom responsibility falls; and make this land not only the refuge of the poor, but the sanctuary of the oppressed.

Hear us in Thy mercy and give us Thy peace. Amen.

Our Accidental Affiliations

MOST people drop into their denominations at their birth, and are so much taken up with the more interesting world that, for the most part, they are contented to stay where their birth deposited them. They are taught certain things that are true to those who stand to them as ideals of character, and they say these things must be true because such lives have proved them true. There are other people who because of temperament are dependent upon authority, and still other people constitutionally dependent on guidance. There are those who are built upon the Moslem types, and they find their expression in Christianity as Calvinists. On the other hand there are natures that must deal with the ultimate reason for their opinion. They are the rationalists. People are in different churches for divers reasons.

The Spirit of Hate Cannot Remain

READ that splendid declaration of the omnipresence of God, in the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm, the high-water mark of Hebrew poetry:

“If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there:
If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall Thy hand lead me,
And Thy right hand shall hold me.”

In the one hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm, read:

“Happy shall he be, that taketh
And dasheth thy little ones against the stones.”

With careful analysis and the passage of the scalpel between the texts, with careful inquiry into the origin of the texts and the conditions under which they were written, we now know that one was the inspired utterance of the spirit of God and the other the inspired hate of all that opposed the Jew. One is the holy spirit of the Scripture, the other is as evanescent as all hate must be. The battle of the churches is dismissed in the interest of the pure gold which is the Word of God.

What the Church Means

IF there could go out today, from this place of prayer, one human soul upon whose mind there had dawned the idea that no amount of phraseology was of any avail, that no amount of profession was of any avail, but that there had been established between the great source of life in God and that soul a connection that made him thrill with the sense of that relationship, it would be worth all you could pay to try the experiment another Sunday. That is what the church is for. That is what it means or it does not mean anything. It is to help to bring about that marvellous thing which happens when the life of God becomes one with the soul of man. If the news that religion brings is good news, it must be good news of a relationship, or at least, a relation that I can establish with the ultimate reality.

Spiritual Sympathy

WHEN in the midst of the antagonism of the churches, there is discovered a church which welcomes the spirit of the time, which is loyal to the discoveries of modern science, which asks only "Is it true?" and never "Is it venerable?" — when such a body of people says to the Catholic, or to the Jew or any evangelical minister, "Speak here in this pulpit the thing you know concerning God and the soul," something must be learned of that higher sense of spiritual affinity and the life of the soul that binds people together. To be a member of such a church, a man has only to be sincere and a seeker of the truth. He cannot be a wilful sinner if he loves truth and goodness.

What Religion Is

THE effort to make people say the same thing whether they understand it or not, divides the churches, because what is one man's meat is another man's poison, and what is one man's creed is another man's anathema. The heresy which has nothing to recommend it is this; that accuracy of statement, uniformity of opinion, clearness of definition, — that this constitutes religion. It never did and it never will! *Religion is a passionate devotion to the will of God.* The Christian religion is a passionate devotion to the will of God, as Jesus revealed God to men. It is for you to decide whether the ethics of Jesus will suffice for the administration of life. If

you are Christians and you want to serve the cause of Christian unity, then adopt the simplest possible statement of purpose and forego any effort to harmonize opinion.

Independence a Necessity

THERE are people who, if you gave them their choice, would sincerely declare that they would rather worship God all by themselves, on a basis that no other human being would accept, than to be dominated by any other human being in the world. That is the kind of thing that made the American Revolution as distinguished from "the divine right of kings," and it is the kind of thing that makes a nation, if you get enough of such people together. It is the kind of thing that makes a church, — independence of temperament, by conviction, by habit of thought, by the study of history, by the very rights of devotion by which a man wants to say his own prayers to his own God and have it out, sin and all, with heaven. You can no more dispose of his responsibility than he can escape the sense of his sin. For this reason, uniformity of Christianity will never prevail.

The Right Tone

I BELIEVE in the church as an assemblage of people given over to an earnest devotion to the will of God, not an assemblage of people whom you can designate by the badge they wear or the phrase

they use. In the Egyptian Book of the Dead, among the splendid passages that are written concerning the soul as it goes up to be weighed and passed on into the Courts of the Blessed — this significant thing is added to all the other virtues: "*He hath the right tone.*" It means that he could say the holy things in the holy way. This has gone out of use except in rare and isolated instances. There is only one tone for character and for religion together. Many a man of supreme faith has never been a "professor of religion" in the usual sense of the word. He is not therefore to be dismissed without investigation as to whether or not he is really a believer.

Life is the Test

THE church never was so weak in its hold upon the common people as it is today, because the church has been built upon a speculation about Christ and not upon a vindication and realization of His life. This is the radical defect of the church. Over and over again, it must be insisted that *religion is not its definition*. Religious experience is therefore not its theological or doctrinal statement, a distinction that must be maintained in a most insistent way. The churches have been created by doctrine, while lives are only built up by life. Therefore the church declines, and life bourgeons evermore in fullness, richness and power. The problem set every Christian is to get back in terms of humanness the life of Jesus Christ.

The Need of Religious Services

WE encounter people, who, with regard to the attendance upon church service, say that it is no longer necessary to them; that they are "free souls"; that they have been "delivered from custom." They mean that what was His "custom" whose name they bear — the name of Christ — they do not need. If that be so, let them give themselves to others who do need it, who have not grown so great, who have not reached such spiritual proportions. One class of people really need the discipline, instruction, training and routine observance of the usages of religion because they are still in their pupillage. For them a great grip of the soul is required to hold on to the sense of spiritual realities. Even to those "liberated" souls there can never come the time when they shall not desire to minister to the next man who needs them.

The Only Heresy

THE simple religion which transfigured the life of Israel's last great Prophet and from that pure Heart of boundless benevolence flowed out to bless the world, — this stream of pure affection sank as a desert stream in the sand. The stream was lost for ages underground, reappearing at intervals as a spring to flow for a little while, but lost again in subtleties of speculation or impurities of life. Secular history calls the ages beginning with the sixth century "dark." But the history of the church closes

its short day before the light declines upon the imperial countenance of Constantine. The only heresy which has nothing to recommend it, soon became universal—the heresy which declares that intellectual accuracy is the condition of salvation, and a formula of belief, the guarantee of religion.

The Church the Flower of Civilization

THE church, then, is needed, not as attendant upon civilization, but as civilization's flower; for it gives the opportunity for such personal sacrifice, such education of the soul to its highest tasks, as may be worthy of most serious study. The free church has a great ideal, which is no less than the perfection of the individual that he may serve the perfection of the whole. Its open doors should be as hospitable as the summer; its worship should be enkindled from on high; its service might be reduced to any simplicity without losing its dignity; and its people, by the very fact of their presence there in the holy hour, should be like sensitized plates waiting for the penciled ray of the Divine to make the picture of holiness upon their minds.

The Place of Worship

AS each week goes by with the discouragements that come into it, turn to the place of worship, as Jesus in His discouragement remembered that place where the heavens were opened to Him. Learn to abandon yourselves to God; to let yourselves go

upon life's tide with small care of what becomes of you; and so gird yourselves in every hour of worship that you shall be strong enough, not only for the tasks that are your own, but strong enough also for the burdens that are not your own. Come to the church out of life's perplexities, out of life's discouragements, out of the strenuous days which tax your endeavor, — come to dedicate yourself unto the will of God, being sure that nothing is of much account but that the soul shall find itself at home in the presence of the Eternal, who is its life.

The Supreme Purpose of the Church

THE one supreme purpose of the church is the spiritual renewal of its people. It is neither an entertainment nor meant merely to be the source of information. The one purpose of the church and its greatest function to sincere religion, is that you may get out of yourselves into the higher realm of the spiritual life for which you pine. Inspiration is its end and almost its sole end; so that the man who comes in from the contact of the week's work, feeling that his very mouth tastes of dust, and that he has been harried beyond endurance, may shear the whole matter away and see how small the environment of his life appears in the presence of the great things of eternity. He shall go away, feeling that the cares, which he calls his business, have no comparison in importance with his one business — the growing of a human soul.

The Church an Organism

“SOCIETY is an organism in which every cell has consciousness”; that is, the health of the whole depends upon the health of each individual cell. So the church is not a mechanical device for saving your soul; it is an organism, a normal part of society for saving by its organic power something not yet sound. The church exists for the community in which it lives, and never for itself. Every church, having placed itself on record as standing for certain ideals, owes to the community that all its efforts shall be spent upon the betterment of that community which has given it ground for being. Unless the need of the world's betterment at its very doors leads it to go out to a service greater than that which occupies it within its walls, it has lost the opportunity for its highest life.

“Ask and Ye Shall Receive”

YOU take away from the service of religion exactly what you bring. The docile spirit goes away instructed. The hungry soul goes away satisfied. The prayerful spirit finds God, and does not know much of anything beside. It ought to be impossible for any minister of religion, by any mischance or failure of his own, to spoil the service of religion for any profoundly spiritual nature. We take away what we bring. If we come thinking we are full, we shall go away unsatisfied, and lay the blame at some other's door.

“ Seek and Ye Shall Find ”

I CANNOT conceive of a more useless effort than that we should come into the church and go through with an exercise of religious nature that has not even the value of a calisthenic unless accompanied by more than a mental athletic, more than a range of emotions. Unless we go forth ready as expectant souls, as voyagers search the horizon for a sail, or wonder when the land will loom over the deeps on which they are travelling, — unless we go out in that attitude of mind, little has been accomplished.

The Power of Faith

Faith does not consist in agreeing to propositions but in reposing in confidence and love.

PRAYER FOR SELF-SURRENDER

THY children seek Thee, Father, not praying Thee to come near, but praying that they may be able to bridge all the distance of their souls' variant from Thine, and their wishes that are not according to Thy will, and come near to Thee who art always waiting, and who dost not turn away any that come to Thee. O God, who needest never to be persuaded, persuade us by Thy spirit to be wholly Thine. Let the thought of consecration to Thy will have taken from it all the things that hurt and are hard to endure, and become the pure delight of the souls that seek Thee: so that to be Thine by the act of our will shall be as real to us as that we are Thine by the creation of Thy hand. May nothing seem so natural to us as to seek Thee: may nothing seem so full of joy as to know that Thou art God. We pray Thee enlighten our eyes that we may see the truth, and open our hearts to its reception, and give us such devotion to the will of God that it shall become our constant joy. Amen.

Facts versus Definitions

CARLYLE quotes with approval the bitter proverb, "Thou wouldst do little for God if the devil were dead." But, the devil is dead. Are there few that serve God? We answer: The Age is profoundly religious, though it has repudiated a trembling timidity, and declares for the soul's right to know God unhindered by any fear. It matters nothing to the aspect of the sunrise and its day, and nothing to the quiet evening with its stars that Copernicus reversed the procession of the planetary system, and plucked the still earth from the center and set it spinning on the levels of the lighted paths which now it must obediently follow. Men still look eastward from the lamp which lights them to their labor. The facts remain when all their definitions change.

God the Power of the Universe

THE water of the Great Lakes pours itself in the rapids of Niagara and flings itself down from its height to the great depth below. One-tenth of one per cent. of it has been taken out and passed through the mighty trench, and then is poured out into the river below the Falls. Practically none of it is lost. What happens in the process? Great factories spin with all their machinery. Twenty miles away, street-cars are bringing in their freight of human lives, propelled by this power. The dynamos have generated the electricity. They have been

moved by the turbines in the trench of the great duct through which the water has been led. Sever the connection between the first turbine and the first dynamo, and all is darkness, all traffic stops, all machinery stands still; the translation of the power of the floods from power to light, from power to motion, from power to manufactured products, is at an end. It is just as easy to imagine the impossibility of a world of being without Being at its base, as to imagine a world of light without power to kindle it.

Desire and Supply

THE world is so ordained that there never yet has been discovered a persistent desire native to human life, instinct in human life, permanently expressed in human life, but that it was the registry, not simply of a desire that would be fed, but of a supply that was bound to appear. The botanist takes up the flower, and knows by its very construction the kind of insect that is engaged in its propagation, the distribution of its pollen. The naturalist takes a single bone or a single tooth and constructs in imagination the creature and its habitat. God never flung a flag out yet and called it desire, that was not placed over a cairn where He had cached for some explorer in the world a reservoir of supply. The gravitations of life are not accidental, but intentional. Their pull is toward the center of the planet to which they belong.

The Attitude of Faith

“FAITH” is a much misunderstood word. It is supposed to be the prerogative of those who “get religion.” You can not get religion; you can not get *rid* of it. It is in the fibre of your nature; it is part of your tissue; it is woven, interwoven, and completely involved with the whole structure of the human mind. *Religion is a function of the human soul*; faith is the exercise of that function. The New Testament declares that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” A modern man has given this definition: “Faith is the conviction that in the universe there is something that corresponds to my best.” That is the attitude of faith. When I am at my best, the universe and I are in intimate correspondence.

The Appeal of Faith

THE man of faith believes profoundly in that Ultimate Reality which in moments of divine communion he calls the Great Companion and in moments of reverie seems to him the very palpitating heart of the universe itself. He is a believer in God. If the saint has his idea of God, and the savage his symbol, that is not a question of religion, but of development. In all the world no human being, from the most developed saint of any creed, or kind, or religion, down to the creature who bowing down before stock or stone worships there, was ever left unheard by the Being who made him.

The Faith that is in You

THE first business of the believer is to know what he believes. A general vague susceptibility to anything that comes our way is not faith: that is credulity. *No utterly credulous person can be a believer.* A real believer must be an inquirer. He must carefully discriminate in terms that make him sure; so that when he has cleaned up his mind, the things he holds to, he holds to tenaciously and with a grasp that nothing can loosen. The first condition of believing in anything is to be sure of it. For that reason, we pre-eminently believe in Christ because we realize what He was. The first thing to that end is to acquaint one's self with the documents that tell about His life.

Faith in the Ultimate Reality

I HOPE that you have come to be possessed by the idea that there is an Ultimate Reality; that we are not tied up to phantoms; that we are not anchored to floating bogs; that we do not simply live upon the scaffolding of life; that we are not, as we say, trying to make the best of things; and that we are not condemned to illusion. Emerson said, "We must trust the order of Nature so completely as to believe that whatever questions the universe prompts us to ask, the universe can answer." This splendid faith also took this form in the mind of the same great writer: "Whatever it is that the great Providence has in reserve for us, it must be something

beautiful and in the grand style of His work." These are the utterances of absolute assurance.

Love is the Heart of the Universe

“AND of which of you that is a father, shall his son ask bread, and he give him a stone? or a fish, and he for a fish give him a serpent? If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?”

It is a matter for congratulation that no philosophic insight nor scientific inquiry has yet devised a method which more completely meets the needs of human life than this simple statement of the terms on which we may believe that at the root of all things is the eternal goodness, that a heart of love is the heart of the universe.

To recognize all human relationships as only normal and healthy when grounded in man's highest nature is as true as it is to say that there is no earthly measure which can reach the height of that heaven in which love dwells. We admit as true that a house is not necessarily a home, a brood of children is not necessarily a family, united lives are not necessarily joined together of God, so long as lust can be distinguished from love. It is no less true of every other sphere; and the distinguishing glory of the work of Christ is that in adjusting human relations He put them upon a basis where they can be regarded as the earthly reflection of a heavenly fact.

The light which shines upon the sea of human life is the reflection of all that overarching heaven which mirrors itself in the tides of our common life. This is the sense in which Jesus said: "What one of you that is a father, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?"

The knowing how to give good gifts is based upon that native goodness which lives in man in spite of the evil with which it is associated. From the field of his daily life, he gathers the wheat for those who depend upon him, though it may grow among the tares of actual sin. How much more, says the Teacher, shall a Being on whose purity no fleck or spot is found, who can not be God unless He is good, who knows with no dimness upon his vision of the perfect good, who is "without variableness or shadow of turning" — how much more will this perfect goodness exceed the goodness limited, imperfect, and encroached upon by sin, and "give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." The glory of God is in his goodness.

The Natural Ground of Faith

JESUS stood at the high noon of a spirit divinely clear, and lifted this warning to those whom midnight threatened: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" But, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." It is the tribute of a luminous nature to the natural ground in man for the clearest enlightenment. It is a warning of One who knows how precious sight

is toward those whose course may bring blindness. It is nature protesting against the unnatural. To Jesus, the spiritual life was a part of what is nature's realm. He was a lover of nature. He saw the hues of the lily and smiled His recognition of how "God clothed the grass of the field." His effort, *therefore*, was never to prove God in nature, but on nature to build up a perfect confidence concerning God in human life: "Will He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

When we come to understand religion, root and branch, the soil it grows in, the fruit it bears, its deepest roots below, and stretch of tendril above, when we know the fragrance of its flowering, then shall we recognize, and be comforted and confirmed by the recognition, that religion is nature at its best. There can be no religion that is vital that is not natural; so that when we are at our best, we are nearest God. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." All that the great Teacher seems to be pleading for is naturalness unhindered. The thought of the naturalness of the light within belongs to humanity. It is not brought from without or kindled from without; it is only fed from without. "The light in thee" is thine own but only because the great central sun is thine own also.

Spiritual Creation is of God

THERE is a very profound truth wrapped up in that familiar declaration, "We are His workmanship." We can bring nothing from the outside

to God, for He has made these things which we do, the result of what we are, and what we are in this spiritual creation is of God. Whatever we may achieve and inscribe with our name, the Great Workman's name is written over ours. We are but unfolding what was long ago enfolded; and when we are most ourselves, we are most God's also. When fruit hangs ripe on the vineyard slopes of the Rhine, we speak not so much of grapes, as of soil and climate and careful cultivation, so, when our best fruits appear, it is still the fruit of the Spirit. We are planted, nourished, tended, and will be gathered at last, ourselves the fruit of God's great bounty, — not what we can do, but what we can be. It is not ours, but *us*, God claims.

Two Words in Religion

THERE must be in the cause everything that is in the effect, — a living world from a Living Cause, a world of mind from an Infinite Intelligence, a world of love, which, when we see full circled, we shall know as Browning did, that "All's love, yet all's law." The two go together; and it is for that reason that when we get through with our analysis, we find that there are just two words in religion, "God" and "the soul." Our effort continually is to build a bridge between these two, to spring an arch over from the pier that we call God to the pier that we call soul. The effort of religion in its history, experience, struggle, means that between God and the

soul there are relations as between cause and effect; and the spirit of man seeks its origin in the Eternal Spirit.

Modern Faith Content with Symbols

ONE of the pitiful things about modern faith is that it hangs on the garment of Christ instead of embracing the Lord Himself; that it hovers about an empty grave, contented with the poetry of religion, when *religion's self* is capable of creating new poetry and new scriptures, if it be vital enough. We are sustained by the poetry of religion as its legitimate adornment; we are filled with the vision of its beauty; but the old poem repeated is not worth so much as one fluent line of the soul's communicated beauty in a new poem of the spiritual life. Our business is not to recite the legends of the past but to create the psalms of the present. The new watchword of religion is Love; its new expression is Life.

The Supreme Acknowledgment of Jesus

JESUS said: I am a Voice, I am a Messenger, I am a Light, I am anything approximate, nothing ultimate. So if you would know whether what I have been saying is part of the mind of God, fits into the divine order, do not ask Me how I got it. If any man will do God's will, as I am doing it, he shall *know* of the teaching whether it is of God or whether I have spoken of Myself. It is the temptation of

all splendid intelligences to say something on their own account. But it is the supreme offering of the highest intelligence and the most exalted consciousness to refer all that it is to the spring from which it flows, and say, "I am only the conduit; I am the conveyor; I am as nothing to the original source."

Triumph of the Faithful Soul

THERE are not battalions enough yet recruited for the army of sorrow to hold permanently a faithful soul to the dust. The "rush" passes over him and he pulls himself together and readjusts his strength. Or when the slower moving care surrounds him like a night, that slowly descends upon his path, he waits until the day shall dawn. He knows "it is always morning somewhere in the world." Perhaps the song that he will sing when his new day arises, will be this:

"Dear Lord, since Thou didst make the earth,
Thou mad'st it not for grief, but mirth:

Therefore will I be glad

And let who will be sad.

Lord, as 'tis Thine eternal state

With joy undimmed to contemplate

The world that Thou hast wrought

As mirror of Thy thought,

So every morning, I will rise

And offer thee for sacrifice

A spirit bright and clear

As the wide atmosphere.

For, Lord, since all is well with Thee,

It can not well be ill with me."

Faith in the Unseen

IN the story of Thomas and his disbelief like a challenge comes that splendid statement of Jesus: "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless, but believing." When Thomas is convinced that he actually sees the Man with whom he had walked the ways of Galilee, there follows the statement: "Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." Blessed are you who in this maelstrom of commercial activity, must believe, though you have not seen. Believe what? What Jesus was trying to prove to Thomas, that the real being is not of the body but of the spirit; that personality inheres not in the flesh but in the relationships of life; the whole bearing of the story is to put a premium upon being sure, but the avenue of sureness is spiritual apprehension, not simply physical touch.

There is Nothing Alone in the World

WHEN Jesus said to his disciples, "I will not leave you orphaned. I will come to you. I will send another Helper who shall be with you forever," we regard the statement as the utterance of a spiritual truth. It is the utterance of an absolute scientific fact that no child of God need ever in all the world feel that he is lost sight of or alone. From least to

greatest, from most minute to nearly infinite, there is nothing that is alone. That is the guarantee that God and you belong together — the Source and its outcome; the Cause and its effect; the Creator and the creature; the Infinite and what you vainly call yourselves, “finite,” who are not finite, but only the infinite under finite conditions. All these are woven into the body of life together. That God and the soul belong together is not only true but it may be *consciously* true.

Faith is a Natural Faculty

THE sum of our beliefs is not the weight of our convictions. Our guesses at Truth steady the mind by fixing the attention but they can never be substituted for the assured conviction by which we live. Nor must we wait for this conviction to come to us from the outside.

Faith is a natural faculty, as much as judgment and memory and reason. It is a part of the behavior of the human soul. It gathers dignity from the Object which it approaches and upon which it bestows itself. The faith of a Newton — if it be only an intellectual opinion — may be a much less regenerating force than the faith of a negro slave who took his lashes and trusted God. Faith gathers dignity in the ratio of the supreme and commanding glory, power, loveliness and honor of its object. Faith is not the sum of our beliefs but the gathered momentum of the soul.

The Spiritual Sphere is Real

WHO are these who are neither cynical nor foolish; who seem not to feel the spasm of inward vexation, nor are tossed on the constant upheaval of moral passion which feels itself helpless to relieve the cause of its pain? Long ago, they made the discovery that the *spiritual sphere is real*. To them the divine Presence is a conscious experience, and they dwell in the midst of the certainties which appear to the man "alive unto God." They stand amid the vexations, uncertainties and inequalities of our common life, as the rock stands though all the sea is beaten into foam about its base. They are not wanting in feeling; they are not untouched by what concerns their human brothers. They are not driven to despair; they are in the best sense believers. "Great peace have they who love Thy law, and nothing shall cause them to stumble."

The Faithful Soul Accepts God's Work

FAITH is no longer the statement of the unproved and unprovable, established upon the authority of somebody's word. I would not have the world other than it is, in all its natural forces; but I would make it other than it is in its social discredit and reproach. The faithful man today accepts God's work; the loyal soul is the faithful soul. The faithful soul would not have the universe jarred out of its course because he happens to be in the path of danger. He accepts the terms it sets for him.

The Larger Vision

The ideal life is the most practical because it is the most creative.

PRAYER FOR DIVINE GUIDANCE

WE thank Thee, O God, for the nearness and communion of the Most High, that we are not left alone to work out the problems of life, but are conscious of the constant leadership of the Holy Spirit. Oh, brood our spirits with Thine own, that nothing may seem impossible to us because it is part of the school of life. Grant that the way we take may seem to be Thy paths, that we go not on forced errands of duty, nor neglect the plain path of divine appointment. We thank Thee for life and strength and the privilege to do some part of Thy work in the world, and that we are Thy husbandry, planted in the soil of life,—Thy building, reared upon the foundations of Thy truth. Make us as temples in which Thou shalt come to dwell.

Hear us, O God, for those that have special need of Thee, for those that need to tell Thee what they can not forgive themselves, that they may be forgiven of Thee; and that those may be comforted whom no human voice can console. And for those that are sick, upon whom the temporary disability of life has fallen, let it not touch the soul; keep them quiet within the circle of the pain; and grant those who minister to them that they may be given grace so that their anxiety may not overcome their duty. To those who think there is death in the world, let them know that there is no

death, and that all whom we call dead are living in Thy sight.

Overshadow the land with Thy goodness, that all who minister in holy things of government as well as holy things of persuasion, may be ministers of the living God. Overshadow our personal endeavor, and keep us near to the guidance of Thy holy spirit. We ask these things as Thy children.

Amen.

The Fruit is the Test

THE germ of human life contains enclosed all its future powers. No wonder that its primitive expression should seem a contradiction of its future, and the idea of the fall of man become a form of thought. Coarse-fibred wood, shaggy bark, unfruitful expanse of foliage, apparently useless flowering, — all go before the generous yield of perfected fruit. But the fruit is the test. Neither stalk, nor branch, nor leaf, nor blossom is enough to mark the end of the tree's being, because they are but means to the end. "By their fruits ye shall know them." When we take up the fruit which has fallen ripe, and note its perfect form, and see what wise provision is in it for all its ends, — the enclosing of the seed, the nourishment for the young life, the chemical constituents, either of food for healthy life or medicine for disease, — we applaud the evidence of design, and when we look abroad over all varieties of such products, we see everywhere traces of wise and benevolent design.

When all nature is thus full of design in all its lower orders of being, is it not strange that it should have been thought necessary to say that man fell from a high degree of perfection, from sinless holiness, and thus declare that God's work, so perfect everywhere else, so full of design, failed in man, the highest expression of that work? It was due to not understanding that the law of development, the method of evolution, applied also to the human work

of God. Man was in germ, as all things else; and his spiritual life, his deepest life, his highest life, developed last. "That was not first which was spiritual, but that which is natural." All this is an argument "from design." Carrying out the lines, which are converging from every side wherever there is a growing humanity, we find them meeting in the highest man.

The World Ours to Use

THE world is ours to use in a splendid way. It is too good to be abused, too good to be wasted. There is not enough of it to satisfy the ardent spirit that is in man. The poet exploits it, and turns it into the music of his verse; the painter turns it into the colors on his canvas; the sculptor turns it into the arrested action of the figure that he carves; and the common man and woman of our faith restore it to the hand of God, as a tribute of thanksgiving to the hand that gave it. It is ours to use, not to use up; and there can not be a more immoral state of mind than that of the man who says: "I have a good stand for business; but after me the deluge."

The Unity of God and Man

THERE is no possibility in the universe of isolating, relegating to loneliness, any part of the universe, of which the central word is unity. Not only must every fragment be found in the sum that is the whole, but every fragment must be found of

the same kind in the sum that is the whole. This is the unimpeached bond of religion: that righteousness in God can mean no other than righteousness in man, else we have an alien universe contending with God. In declaring for the being of God as necessary to man, we declare for the same word that in the physical world has come to be axiomatic and imperative; that word is Unity.

The Authority of Experience

THERE is great danger that we will be content to trade upon the religious conviction of the past and so come to regard even God himself as a figure in the history of human thought rather than a tremendous fact in present experience. Let us be instructed by the past. Thought does not move in a circle. If it did, there would be no advancement. It must move in a spiral where, although the lines are parallel to lines already drawn, they are higher, nearer the summit of certainty. By Jesus, the full tones of past religion are not merely rehearsed. He does not quote much; He "speaks as One having authority." The only authority that can accompany a deliverance on such themes as these is the authority which is conveyed by experience. A man must live in the midst of these divine realities, then he will not speak as one who reports what he has gathered on the outskirts of a great truth, but will convey what that truth taught him when it became his own.

The Condemnation of the Trifler

EVEN upon the face of a trifler is his condemnation written. In his life there is a want of power, intellectual, moral, social. There is no force in his speech, there is no power of sustained attention in his thought, there is no relish in his employments. He has played with life and has outgrown his toys. The power to see truth instantly is often lost in such a nature. He becomes incapable of an heroic attitude of mind, his athletic habit is lost, and the whole moral nature has turned to pulp. The habit of intellectual compromise makes thinking in straight lines dangerous. The habit of measuring details, instead of dealing with principles, tends to prop the soul here and there with the incidental and temporary instead of binding it fast in all its being with the eternal. A man who thus cobbles his life together will lose the sense of power as a sharer in the energy of the Creator.

Definition is Not Reality

ONE grows weary of the people who have a theory of things, — the great dramatic critic who can not write a line that anybody can play on the stage; the great musical critic whom you would dismiss that you might hear an old darkey sing with his mellow voice, into which generations of tears have gone, and the agony of his people; a minister of religion whom you would follow beyond the theories of the philosophy of religion which he may have, and

discover him in the practice of the things that he preaches. In all these instances we find the passage from traditionalism to what is personal and immediate. And the great heresy which substituted intellectual accuracy for an experience of life, lies at the root of insistence on traditionalism. Definition is not reality. Definition is never the thing defined.

We define in order to get a piece small enough to handle. We are confused by the infinite. We say: "It may be dangerous to plunge into the infinite; but so long as the chart is right, and the compass points true, and the man at the helm knows his business, let us sail the sea of the infinite until our ship goes to pieces, and then it will be time enough to know what may happen." All this is very comfortable, but very limited. This is the defect: that we get so used to the definitions of religion that somehow we think it is the thing itself, whereas the thing defined is only a section of the whole to which we are related. All creeds are such definitions, — every creed is a philosophic statement, a speculative statement; and no philosophic or speculative statement can cover the whole fact.

The Dignity of Human Nature

WHEN Dr. Channing in 1819 in Baltimore set the dignity of human nature over against the "total depravity" of man, challenging the doctrine of total depravity of the race by the doctrine of the

dignity and divinity of human nature, it was as notable as any Declaration of Independence ever penned; for it was the statement that God had not made a thing of which He need be ashamed. You can not grow a crop of any kind — men or any other crop — out of stuff that is totally depraved. When the church declared its belief in total depravity and then started to live up to its faith, it reproached God and entered upon a dispensation of despair. We insist upon the dignity of human nature — that we are children of the great God and we belong to Him; that He can not get rid of us; that our business is to grow into His image and be like Him; that moral health is salvation, and to conform to the image of His Son constitutes the atonement.

When Charles Carroll Everett uttered the phrase which has passed into a commonplace, that “human nature is not ruined but incomplete” it carried immediate conviction. Is it not evident that on that basis we are ready to begin any work and do anything for the betterment of our kind? But if humanity be totally depraved, then the sooner it is snuffed out the better. You can not keep an unremedied and contagious disease in contact with the race without hurting it. If that be the condition of God’s creatures there is no remedy that we know except extinction. The dignity of human nature is shown in every aspect of human life. From the most unexpected sources the beauty of human life has appeared, as when one stands surprised at the radiant beauty of a cactus-bloom that grows out of a thorny plant.

The dignity of human nature decreed the emancipation of the slave; and the Abolitionists who preached the doctrine waited for Abraham Lincoln to sign the decree of abolition, — Abraham Lincoln, who said that the only religion that he knew was the religion of love to God and love to man. The abolition of the slave was an impulse that was kindled under the snows of New England, and burned its way southward until the shackles were melted in the focussed fire of that intense desire which the Great Emancipator felt. *The rise of democracy is the guarantee of the love of the other.* There can be no slaves where love rules, there can be no slaves where the dignity of human nature is felt.

The Fetich of Tradition

TAKE any group assembled to discuss the revision of a Confession of Faith. Why should there be any question among them as to an ancient document if it can be stated in terms level to the facts of modern life? The absolute sincerity of the church fathers is unquestioned. The absolute sincerity of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 is unquestioned but that did not hinder the passage of the 15th amendment which gave four millions of slaves their rights as citizens. And yet there were people following the Civil War who talked about the invasion of the Constitution. When you erect a document into a fetich you are simply in a retarded state of spiritual development. There is not much to choose between the

orders of civilization with a fetich, an amulet or a totem and those who take a document which in its day was a very Ark of the Covenant to sincere souls, and say: "For all time this is to abide. The human mind has learned many a thing, but concerning these things it has stood absolutely still." We lament the loss of time and spiritual power in such a state of mind as that.

We are pledged to the advance of science. What is theologically true must be true in the scientific sense as well. When we employ the scientific process, we mean that things are tested by a procession of thought from the fact to the conclusion, not from a supposition back to the fact. Every man stands fronting two sets of phenomena in the world; one set, the phenomena of the material universe; the other the phenomena of the spiritual universe. Why should he suppose for a moment that he can adjust himself to the material universe in terms consistent with his well-being as a creature without also by the same endeavor and purpose adjusting himself to the spiritual universe as a child of God? The two things go together and the separation of them has been the reproach of the churches.

The Relation of Personality to Individuality

THERE are manifold forms of what we call love of country. When President McKinley died, some men were angry against the assassin; some men wanted the extirpation of anarchy; some were torn

with solicitude for the household of the President. Those were manifestations of individual temperament and peculiarity. When at three-fifteen on the afternoon of that Thursday, this whole city understood that the plain casket had been taken from a simple home and was now wending its way to the place where it should be laid, the whole city stopped, uncovered the head, and waited. That impulse, that common submerging impulse, larger than any question of temperament, surrounded like a great sea these little islands of our peculiarities and stood with relation to them as personality stands with relation to the individuality of our lives.

Personality inheres in the consciousness of self. I go out into the street, and some motor runs me down, and I lose an arm. I am hurt as an individual, — that is, I am an individual less an arm. I have not been touched as a person at all; I am exactly the same person I was before. I have the same thoughts, the same loves I had before. So far as a man with one arm can carry out the enterprises that I had in mind, I shall carry them out. When one loses an arm, he is still the same person but not the same individual. When, in the contact of life, one loses the power to love purely, to think nobly, to bear himself bravely, he is not hurt as an individual but as a person. The love tide has ebbed and shall know no flood on that shore. It is the distinction of the soul, when it has its rights, that it must keep up continually the speculative part of our nature. You have no business whatever in hand

except the growing of a human soul. Your individuality is of small importance; your personality everything.

Courage is Essential to Salvation

IF I were asked to name any one thing that is most saving to human life, I should say courage. A discouraged man puts the enervation of his own nature into his work, he puts the dulness of his own spirit into his work. His eye is dull. The eye must be purged of all film; the heart must be true to every motion of the spirit's intention to see the work of God. The one thing we need in order to get on in life is not simply to make the best terms with life that we can, but to *compel* it to the best terms that we need. The motto that I saw over the door of George MacDonald's house in old English, "Corage; God mend all!" is the motto of every soul that is imbued with the faith that we profess. This courage is based first of all on the facts that God is good, and God's world is a good world to be in with God.

The Result of "Higher Criticism"

THE Higher Criticism of the Scripture has resulted in restoring the New Testament to the use of thinking minds instead of having it repudiated by those who found parts of it impossible to believe. It is because students have discriminated between what was the Word of God to the human soul in a progressive revelation, and what were the accidents

of literature in a moving procession of the centuries, that the Bible is prized today as never before by thinking men. Take the story of Jesus in the cursing of the fig tree. To have done that, because the tree had no figs on it when He was hungry, would have forever deposed Him from the leadership of men. No creature can claim to lead or save who is kindled to ignoble anger by personal disappointment. It is the business of people who think for themselves, to say that this incident never happened.

The Critical Habit, and its Antidote

THE most deadening thing in life is the critical habit — the habit as it appears in common life. It does not matter whether you care or not about the criticism. The great secret of defence is not to care if you are out when it rains mud. You simply wait until it dries and brush it off and it does not leave a spot. But the critic himself falls into the order of those for whom we have concern, because always it is the sinner that is to be pitied! The dreadful thing about sin is not its effect but the sin itself. And so the dreadful thing about criticism is not its effect, but the state of mind of the critic himself. It is a prevailing vice, a vice in the mind, arising either from egotism or a desire to play a clever part. Let such remember the instruction: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are reverend, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things

are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." No man can get further than "the love of the truth." Meditating on the truth he loves, he shall himself become each day more like that absolutely True and Infinite who is of all truth the source and end. Passing thus, stage by stage, in the training of the mind, giving it supreme control and filling its realm with whatsoever has virtue, praise, good report, is lovely, pure, just, reverend, and true, the man who thus dedicates his immortal nature to a true hospitality toward such divine visitants as these "shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord." Thus may the least of us rule an inner realm and join in the loyalty to

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves."

The Path to the Quiet Spirit

THERE are some minds that seek what will produce a new sensation, without reference to its quality; and they know only that they live when they are under the stimulating influence of excitement. They hit upon the unpleasant side of every walk in life, and fail of joy through constant irritation. They find the flaw in every character, and so lose faith in men, because they come to believe that all men are like the hideous image they have formed. They do not know how to give themselves up to gladness in

the contemplation of God's beautiful world. To seek the gold in the quartz, not the quartz which encloses the gold; the sweet among the things bitter; the sound core in the center of surrounding decay, — this is the path to a quiet spirit; and it is the first step in that training which ends in the worship of the truth.

The Spirit of the Mind

WHAT shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose himself? The mind bartered for things! Now, just this is what happens to a man, when instead of a body of flesh surrounding and housing a mind sensitive, the mind of flesh "dwells in the fleshly tabernacle." This is that carnal mind that is "enmity against God." There is needed the exhortation: "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind"; for there is something more to be determined about a mind than that it is a well-adjusted mechanism for turning out thoughts. We will never learn what a sacred thing reason is until we learn that as there is mind in the body, so there is a "spirit of the mind," which makes all the difference between thinking and a thought. What sight is to the eye, what the engineer is to the engine, what flavor is to the fruit, what tone is to the organ, what quality is to the voice, that to the mind is the "spirit of the mind."

The "spirit of the mind" is a unit. You cannot present its halves, turning its illumined hemisphere to the public and its night side to the home. A

wholesome nature is a nature whole. As the air must penetrate every cell of the lungs in order to produce healthy action, so the spirit of the mind must appear in all its exercise, in all its thinking, in every relation in life, else either disease has set in or is threatening. When you say of a man, "There is a mean streak in his nature," "There is a coarse fibre in his make-up," "His influence is not good upon my boy," or you, yourself, are not so erect, so upright, after being in his depressing company, — when you become thus conscious of the man, you may be sure it is the spirit of his mind which has impressed you. Therefore should the exhortation be heeded: "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind."

Submission to the Spirit of God

ONLY the Christian religion above all others was bold enough to declare, "*All things are yours.*" "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." Christianity clearly understands the identity of religion and common life. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord." "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." But this divine philosophy can never take the place of the reigning secularism until men accept the condition which it prescribes. No penance of self-denial, no reform of ways and means, no lopping of branches, can do more than for a time retard growth. No mechanical

adjustment of the life to a model, though that model be faultless, can be sufficient. *The spirit of man must submit itself to the spirit of God.* It must have the downfall from on high upon it. It must "be born from above."

The Ground of Spiritual Certainty

TO apprehend a new truth the soul must already be in possession of a ground to stand on. It may not be larger than the two feet can occupy but it must be firm. If a man wants to get a steady view he must stand steadily while he looks. No man can see clearly through a fog or see far while he is in the trough of the sea. Neither is it good going, to any great end, to traverse the realm of conflicting opinion as one crosses a cranberry bog, where the weight must be shifted from one tussock to another to avoid sinking knee deep in the half floating bog. So in the vision of truth a man must have some standpoint capable of bearing his whole weight, and sufficiently elevated to give him a wide view. A man is indeed comforted who comes into the possession of a great truth. New or old it matters not, so it be true and so it be his. He is no longer tossed to and fro but reaches the ground of spiritual certainty.

A Man Must Find Himself

A MAN may not be sure of many things. In his heavens not many stars may shine. It may be the heavens are black with storm and impenetrable

as midnight; yet the man may plod on under dark skies and reach home and comfort and rest, provided only he is sure of himself, strong to follow the road which stretches before him. Though he can scarcely see his foot before him he can feel his feet under him. Often a man has not taken account of himself, has not tested his own integrity. A man cannot be a judge of spiritual verities who has not defined his own relationship to the spiritual sphere, has not even confessed in himself the need of a spiritual life, — a life which draws its conscious inspiration from the ever-present spirit of God, — he has not found himself. How can such a man be sure of himself? Each man after his own order and in his own sphere must judge.

The Lamp in the Temple

IN some natures the inner light may be dim, groping, and stumbling. They may seem to be walking in the night. It may be true of these dark natures of whom we despair that "the lamp in the temple of the Lord" is not gone out, as in the days of the ancient apostasy, — when Eli was old and his sons were infamous priests, — the child Samuel lay awake in the temple watching the single flame burning on the golden candlestick. We hold tenaciously to the thought of the naturalness of the light within. It belongs to humanity. It is not brought from without nor kindled from without. It is only *fed* from without. "The light in thee" is thine own, but only because the great central sun is thine own also.

Motive! Work! Destiny!

MOTIVE! Work! Destiny! this is the sum of existence. Think how these portentous words are related to each other. Thus motive is the spring, work the action, destiny the condition. Motive is causative, work is operative, destiny is resultant. Motive is instinctive, work is expressive, destiny is conclusive. Motive is provided, work is accepted, destiny is awarded. Motive is a thread, work is a skein, destiny is a maze. Motive is simple, work is involved, destiny is inextricable. Motive is hidden, work is manifested, destiny is fixed. Motive is internal, work is external, destiny is eternal.

The Life of God "A Great Deep"

SPECULATIVE theology always was and must be shallow. The deep-sea soundings of the life of God show nothing brought up from that abysm. We move about the errands of our little lives upon the surface of this profound of being. We have forgotten the day we set sail. We do not know on what shore we shall land at last. We are carried willingly forward by that breath of God that "breatheth where it will." We rejoice to feel the tides of the Eternal Spirit lift and sway us; but when we would sound this awful depth, our plummet swings in the shifting currents of the surface near the hand which holds it, and the silent deeps of God give back no word. "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters. Thy footsteps are not known." "Thy right-

eousness is like the great mountains. Thy judgments are a great deep."

The Moral Use of Optimism

THERE is a moral use in optimism that the pessimist never can reach; there is a moral function for the optimist which the cynic wholly ignores. The optimist, the man who believes not that things are at their best but that things are coming to their best, is the man who must of necessity be classed with the believers, as the pessimist must be classed with the deniers. Life is not all shining and brilliant, all fair and attractive; there is an under side of the embroidery, however beautiful the pattern may be on its upper side, that when it is reversed seems disaster and contradiction, and the stitches are all awry. Yet the optimist and the believer belong to the same class; they belong to the class that has in charge the moral triumph of the world.

The Growth of the Soul

Directness of action in moral obligation is the great proof of real moral integrity and power. Expedience must not be considered.

PRAYER FOR INSPIRATION

TO Thee, Father, we come praying for the inspiration of Thy holy spirit. Breathe upon us also; and since Thou hast given us so much to be glad for, add this also, that we shall be glad in God. Since Thou hast filled our hands with Thy bounties, let us not hold them too tightly away from those who lift their empty hands. Thou hast filled our hearts with Thy love. Give freedom of spirit to minister unto woe and want and the famine of the heart of the world. May the beautiful desires for the holy life be not a mere sentiment that pleases us, but an evangel of delight; and God's law sing to us as we strive to do His will!

More than all things else, we seek Thy presence to be known to us. Thou dost surround us like the air; Thou dost enter into us like our blood; Thou art the light of all our seeing; and the joy of every day. And yet, oh God! how dim, how far, how uncertain all that is really seems to us, many a time, when Thou art so near. Let us know Thee for our element. The breath of our life Thou hast breathed into us; let it escape our lips in trust and prayer and adoration of the Eternal Source of being.

We opened our eyes upon the world of God. Let us not be weary of its perplexities, nor disheartened by its uncertainties, but see Thee moving behind all the seeming show of things. Steady us when we fall into lethargy and droop by the way; rally

our nature that is the product of Thy creative hand to the uses of the Divine Will, so that every function of our being shall belong to God. Make our bodies the temple of the Holy Ghost. Make our spirits obedient, oh God, that we may be the sons of God.

Amen.

Sin Damages the Soul

THERE is scarcely a sin that you can name the enormity of which does not lie in the fact that it hurts the soul. There is not one of them that can have its shadow fall upon the human soul without leaving its stain there. "He that sinneth against Me, wrongeth his own soul." There is a loss of function, a limiting of capacity, a dulling of sensibility, a new callus grown upon the place that was sensitive; and from the frivolities of life to life's enormities, the sin lies in the fact that it damages the soul. The soul can not know God now as it could have known God before, and can not deal with life now as it could have before. "God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," says the Scripture. That is a complete statement as to man's beginning, but that is not the history of man. The history lies in the added sentence: "And man became a living soul."

The Soul Makes its own Scriptures

SOME people say, "It is enough for me that the church tells me of God. It is enough for me that the Scripture tells me of God." Suppose you should be cast on some desert island. Suppose you took your passage in the "Spray," that little boat that made the circuit of the world with Captain Slocum. Suppose you were there without Bible, without means of grace. You would be reduced to

your primitive instincts. Instead of a prayer that you could repeat trippingly upon the lips, your prayer would be an inarticulate cry out of the depths of your nature. You would turn to your soul and explore it, and make some scripture for yourself, as has ever been done by prophets in distress who have made their scripture out of the soul. And there alone under the open sky, with the great sweep of waters on every side, you would have to find God for yourself, if you had been depending upon secondary causes and "means of grace" alone.

The Plane of the Human

LIFE, mind, person,—these must be in the Ultimate Reality because they are manifestly in its effects. The rise of the world to its Humanity is the thing we look forward to, not because of its individuality but because of its personality. What we are trying to do is not to perfect the individual but to rise to the plane of the human. The ideal that rises before us is not the merely perfect man or the merely perfect woman. What we are looking for is a *human* creature in whom the person shall be regnant above the form; in whom the person shall be vindicated above the accidents of life; in whom personality shall seem to be an incarnation of the Divine. The proof that we are looking for this is the way in which our hearts respond to the statement in John's gospel with respect to the great personality of Nazareth: "The Word was made

flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth." The perfection of His humanity is the ground of His influence over us.

A New World

YOU try to get Christ's view of God's world as it lies out before you. It is like some morning in the high hills when everything is mist-hung; when the curtain of the mist is over all the world, and the water has been blotted out yonder in the lake, and a vapory cloud is between you and the hills beyond. Suddenly the sun comes out and drinks all the mist; and yonder lies the blue of the lake and the further blue of the hills and the nearer green of the forest, and the singing of the birds is the accompaniment of the coming of light. And it is a new world: it was always there, but was mist-hung until now. So in that moment of the revealing of God in Christ, there is the lifting of all shadow; and the soul suns itself, waiting to know the will of God, saying, "What shall I do in the world, with it and for it 'in His name'?"

Climbing up to Him

THE Christ life was lived upon the most intimate terms with God. When you have reached the decision that the humanity of Jesus stands for your humanity and his relation to God is your relation; when you offer your prayers, not "for the sake of Christ," but "in His name," that is, standing in His stead; when you think of God as you hope and

believe He thought of God; when the Fatherhood of God means to you what it meant to Him, the Brotherhood of the dear Lord comes to you in a way that is a revelation. You climb up the steep path by which He won His way, hearing His "All Hail!" from the cliff above you; and climbing up to His vantage, you look once in His face for very love's sake and then try to see what He sees. To love what He loves is a way of loving Him that He would wish.

"To reconcile the Christ," is the business of those who believe in Him;—to make the law of his life our law; to make the processes of our life dominated by His spirit, not simply coincident with the details of His life. To believe in Him is to catch His secret and tell it again; is to relate ourselves to the sources of His inspiration as He was related to them; is to feel within the banks of our common life the full flood of such a life as His.

The Tone of the Instrument

SOME men front the world from birth with exceptional endowment; but this only adds to responsibility. For them there is the additional danger of great gifts unused. Therefore it is that the temper and tone of the nature is to be the very first care. We speak of a man of fine temper as we speak of the fine temper of a weapon or tool. If two thousand years have been spent in trying to discover the secret of Damascus steel, it would seem to be

labor, thought and care well bestowed to find a texture and substance in our own natures which shall keep a perfect edge and show an unflagging pliability and spring under the strain and use of life. The whole man is to be "tempered together" and "compacted by that which every joint supplieth." Nor does this cause us to run into the danger of artificiality or lack of simplicity. One of the simplest instruments is a violin. We measure its resource by the quality of its tone. So there are natures, mellow, simple, rich, which give forth a tone, when touched, which is worth more than any word accompanying it. This is the unconscious influence of a nature attuned to the sublimest harmonies. The unconscious impact of one sweet, rich, true inner life upon the inner life of another is the source of finest usefulness. That person whose nature has been made strong and true by thought, by prayer, by communion with all that is highest and best will purify the atmosphere of the place he enters; he will re-enforce the feeble whom he approaches; he will rebuke sin without naming it; and he will raise to the highest power the efficiency of those who may be doing not much, but only what they can.

There are men put together so loosely that one should suppose that they were made out of ordinary tow, without any twist put into it. Such a man will not bear a pound's strain. He frays out, pulls apart. He is just oakum that has ceased to be rope and can be used only as filling. On the other hand, there is the high-toned man, strung to the tension

of his greatest power. He makes the music of the world by the virtues which he discourses to the world in which he is placed. I was speaking on a platform one night and a cello, strung just as the musician had set it down, was standing behind me and, as I spoke, I could hear it answer. Every tone of the voice was taken up by the tense strings of the instrument. So is it with the man who is "high toned."

Moral Coalescence

JESUS spoke always of Himself as holding that relation to God which He would have his disciples hold. Observe that marvelous prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John's gospel in which He prays "that they may be one as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they may be made one in Us." It is the declaration of that moral coalescence which is to make the human one with the divine. "The things I do, shall ye do also," He says to his disciples, and "greater things than these shall ye do, because I go unto My Father." Again He says: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect."

The Way of Escape

MANY suggestions of evil, impure thoughts, unworthy motives, unhappy memories can be best resisted by being ignored, literally denied hospitality in souls engaged for better visitants. For the rest—life-long foes, besetments which are ours by

heritage, temptations which float on the tides which "visit our sad hearts," which make discords upon our nerves,—there is naught for such as these but resistance to the death. Let us remember "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation make also a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." The way of escape comes with the temptation, not away from it. To bear life's discipline is more noble than to avoid it. We can not cast our temptations nor the pressure of life at times of crisis on God in any ignoble way, or substitute luxury for victory, or idleness for work.

Triumph over Limitation

WHAT fixes responsibility? Not man's circumstantial surroundings, but man's alliance with circumstantial surroundings; not man's inherited temperament so much as the cultivation by encouragement or vigorous pruning of inherited temperament; not the appeals of sin, but the entertainment, or high scorn with which he meets the appeals of sin. Like the green withes, bursting like burnt flax from off Samson's godlike limbs, these limitations of circumstance, temperament and temptation fall away from the sublime soul that has kept its covenant with God.

If the integrity of life is difficult to maintain, remember that nature has ordained that every struggle shall help to quicken the soul, harden the fibre, strengthen the muscle, cleanse the blood; and that

the only way of salvation is to be like Him of Nazareth, who was "the best example of the saved man." Why? For the simplest of all reasons: that He is the best example in history, so far as we have any record, of one who lived His life wholly in consciousness of the oneness of the soul with God. This is our destiny.

The Quality of Reverence

THE human mind needs to be alone with itself. It needs to be quiet and to brood and fashion its own life out of "reverence for the things that are above," "for the things that are around, and for the things below," as Goethe has said. That is an essential quality of the well-ordered mind. The things above provoke it to worship; the things around produce in it the sense of fellowship; reverence for the things below inspires it to the great compassions of life. Reverence is an essential quality of the well-ordered and normal mind and the believer is dealing with the reverential quality in the mind. Your children live in a world of mythology, of fancy, of fairy stories. They say things about the Eternal that sometimes seem irreverent; but it is the wonder-element—their very reverence—that leads them to say these things.

Celestial Relationships

WE stretch our hand upwards in prayer; we would embrace the immediate God. We fall upon the earth in adoration: it is holy ground which pulses

with His life! We feel as though our hearts would break for the sorrow of the world, for it is missing the vision of the Eternal. We kindle not from below, but from above. We would not ask Him to grant us anything but to be near. We turn from supplication as from something individual, not personal; and prayer is divine affection seeking its own. The flower is opening because the sun has risen; the earth is warm because the sun is shining; the banks are full because the snow is melting: it is summer in the soul!

Let us consider how the moment the heart warms with fires which are pure, the moment the mind opens to the summer that seems celestial, the moment that human relations pass from being personal to being ideal, the moment my friend becomes to me not simply a personal presence, but an embodied ideal, so soon the heavens are open and the angels of God begin to descend upon the humanity new-awakened in the soul. Let us do this first; let us love all things that are lovable in order that we may love all unlovely things. And in the first estate we shall worship and in the next estate we shall serve.

A New Motive in Religion

THERE has come into religion a new motive,—the assertion not of the individual, but the adoration of an inclusive personality. The old heroism, by which the martyr refused to deny his Lord, is substituted now by that finer loyalty of the devout

soul to the order of the universe which is no longer individual, but personal; and he can not deny that great "Other" without the alternative that he has repudiated himself. This is that personality, like an ever-present ideal, declaring to our conscious souls "he that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul." No man looking up into the heavens can fail to add, "In all worlds, love must be better than hate."

The Search for God

THE struggling soul matches one argument against another, trying to join the edges of its apprehension of the reality of things, seeking to fix a dial upon which it may register the discoveries of its experience; and when it has done its utmost, it then descends into the deep places of religious emotion and finds the wells of life deep and crystal clear; here is the center of the divine affections. The Soul can know God only in *terms of love*. "Canst thou by *searching* find out God?" is an inquiry as ancient as human failure returning from its search. It has an answer for all time in that beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall *see* God."

A mean man can not find God because all the doors of the heart open from the inside and there is no power by which the Divine Providence can pry open the door of the heart that is securely bolted by the man who lives within. No unclean man can find God. No man of filthy imagination can find

God. No man who is intent upon exploiting his fellow can find God. It was no accident that one sang centuries before Jesus came, "I shall awake in Thy likeness"; "Guide me by Thy counsel and afterwards receive me to glory." These statements of the Psalms are part of the soul's instinct that our business is to move with God's motion, who is the center of all motion; to think His thoughts after Him; to love according to His fashion; to be compassionate like God; to be tender with an infinite tenderness, and to "haste not, rest not" in doing His will.

Saving your Soul

YOU can not save your soul. If you are ever saved, your soul will do it. You could just as well talk about a man saving his seed-wheat by keeping it in his barn. He saved it and his field has grown up to grass: he has not any harvest but he has saved his seed-wheat. Another man does not save it at all but flings it into the ground which he has ploughed and harrowed, prepared and mellowed, until it is ready for just that kind of thing that seed-wheat is. He flings it away but the next autumn the abundant harvest of his rich acres will show that his seed-wheat saved him. It is just so with the soul. You can not "save your soul" without "losing it." God put into man the breath of life and said to him "Save your kind." The business of life is to get a grip on something that is not strong

enough to strike out for itself. It is not a question whether we shall live forever—it is a question whether in the sight of God and man we are *fit* to live forever. It is not a question of finding heaven but of being heavenly; the rounding of character, the flowering of every faculty in our nature.

“There are some natures so constituted that they are doomed to deep feeling and high thinking, and the only rescue for them is in deeper feeling and higher thinking.” This is the reason why natures not so robust grow weary of the struggle to know God, to know his will and to do their duty; and being weary, at length supinely recline upon some authority that is baseless as a cloud. They can not thus be saved. They can not be saved by another; they must be saved first from themselves. There is no permanent rescue for the struggling soul but to struggle through. The human soul which has learned its flight must forever wing its way.

The Next Responsibility

CAN the soul know God and does it know when God speaks to it? That is the thing we are to struggle for, from first to last; and if we do not realize it in some sense we have not touched the border of the religious life.

Did Jesus deal gently and suavely with life? No! He dealt with life as a surgeon. He said, “Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye but considerest not the beam that is in thine own

eye?" He dealt with things as they were and built from the ground up. Our business is to get our responsibility so near home that it can be attended to. We have got to focus responsibility well in the foreground of our life.

The High Prerogative of Souls

IT would be unwholesome if human beings in God's world were so sin-ridden or sorrow-laden that they could never be quiet in spirit nor complacent, but to be self-satisfied is quite another matter; and no human being can tell that another human being is self-satisfied, without being that very self, because quiet of the external manner may very well be a mask to hide inward convulsion. A Japanese who is the perfection of good breeding will smile while he tells you of the death of some one near to him,—because the idea has been ingrained through generations that it is the business of life to make life easy for the other. It is the high prerogative of souls to take burdens from others, but it is not ours to lay them upon others.

The Triumph of Goodness

OUR real trouble is that we do not believe in goodness. We worship smartness; we worship cleverness; we worship wealth. The real necessity is, that the man in the rough and tumble of life, if he would save himself alive, must believe in *the ultimate triumph of goodness*. Failure to believe this is the only infidelity left in the world. A man can not

philosophically say, "There is no God." We have worked out of the materialism in which it was said man had no soul. The only real infidelity is that of a man who prefers to get on, no matter how soon he may have to get off. His ideal is accumulation, aggrandisement, position, elevation; when if for one day he were enamored of goodness, he would feel as if he had been living to no purpose.

So we are given not only to the passion for the truth but to the love of goodness. Often, the incisive, the far-down, the deep trouble is that men do not believe in the triumph of goodness. Men who believe in that would stake everything on it. But you will meet other men at the crossing of the roads of some moral action, and if you could look into their minds, you would find them spending their energy and power of mind and strength upon a nice balancing of probabilities, as to whether they can sail close to the reefs of wrong-doing and yet escape. They spend upon that question energies of soul and mind that would make saints of them if it were applied to the real development of spiritual life.

The Tempered Nature

THE absolute temper, the absolute poise of nature, the absolute self-possession in a man in whom the fruit of the Spirit appears in temperance, assures him that he is well along toward that salvation which is moral health and power. God shall surely want him for some great

work in this world's life. The problem in life is a tempered nature that shall do its work all the way round, and shall order its emotions to follow the guidance of its reason, and shall order its reason not to hold itself too stiffly before the appeals of its emotions.

The Attitude of the Meek

WHAT shall be said of meekness? Is it a certain inaptitude to take one's own part? No! I am put in trust of my own powers as you are, and of my own decisions and of all which concerns my life. It is not meekness which refuses to be brave: it is cowardice! But there is an attitude of the soul in which meekness dwells which stands before God and is humble; which stands before human life and is moved by moral passion, the greater because it feels all unworthy to do the part which it hungers to do. It stands before life's mystery and commits itself to God, who knows the end from the beginning. This is the meek man who "shall inherit the earth," says Jesus, for he is the only man fit to have it.

Long-Suffering

"LOVE," "joy," "peace," "long-suffering," "gentleness" go together. Long-suffering means to hold our ideals in spite of our pain, and gentleness is the speech of suffering which gasps to recover its breath from pain and speaks not words out of pain, but out of peace.

We have known people in our lives to whom we have gone simply to sun ourselves in their presence, and they were sufferers. It was not their suffering which was like imprisoned sunshine; it was the deep, abiding confidence of the soul; the power of the spirit that went to its windows in its prison when the light was failing and uttered its prayer for peace. This is "long suffering" with "gentleness." "Goodness" stands next in the ascending series. The nun in her cloister is the embodiment of gentleness. The Sister of Charity in the slums is the embodiment of goodness. The one prays in her cloistered seclusion and grows intimate with God; the other prays and goes out into the shadows to find those whom God never forgets. She follows the path where pain has left its trail and goes into places where no human creature should live; and there the goodness which is gentleness, grown mellow and ripe, achieves a comfort which no prayer alone can ever achieve.

The Unused Talent

IT is not necessary that a man shall achieve a great work but it is necessary that the thing which he does shall be in just proportion to his working power. The work in life is to be judged by moral values, not by standards either mechanical or numerical. This is the reason why it is better a man should expend all his power in his work than that he should have great powers to expend. *Nothing is so deadening to right living as a balance of unused faculty.*

It seems to infect with its decay the whole man, so that what he once did well, being only a part of what he might have done, comes at last to be difficult to do, from the weight of indifference and lethargy laid upon him by the gifts he has failed to use.

The Potency is God's

THE fact is that the susceptibility is ours, and the potency is God's. We are the sensitized plates and the light is His. The soil is ours, capable of all fertility; but the downfall from on high is His, capable of awakening all fertility. The fruit of the Spirit may be found in that man who works as though he worked alone and trusts as though he had none to help but God; and puts his endeavor into his whole business as though all things were expected of him without assistance; and looks for divine guidance and aid as though he had no potentiality of his own. When nature comes to this union of the human with the divine, it discovers that the human is divinely inspired, and the divine is humanly perceived.

Our Riches and Our Poverty

THIS is at once our riches and our poverty, that we can not know anything except from our experience. It is our poverty if we be poor in experience; it is our riches, if we be rich in experience: that is just the difference between one man's revelation concerning divine things and another man's.

One man speaks the commonplace because he is commonplace; the other man speaks the things divine because the secret of the Lord is with him. Humanity is instructed by the secret ministry of the soul's growth; and the Son of Man becomes the representative, the medium by which heaven may be known to earth and earth make strides heavenward, in an enlarged humanity which is the perfect revelation of the divine.

Self-Discovery

THE soul must have its momentum *today*. It can not get on by being wound up to a false enthusiasm by a spiral spring fastened back some thousands of years. The thing *I think I think* is a poor substitute for the abiding conviction of the soul that knows the Eternal is the Great Companion of its days. I am sure that no other discovery that has been made has found its true reason and motive for being unless the soul has discovered itself; that is the mission of every human being,—to live the life which shall every day be a voyage into the infinite and every night a return from a pilgrimage rich with discoveries.

The Registry of the Soul

THAT is a fine statement of the philosophy of life that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews gives, referring to Moses, when he says that the secret

of his moral fibre and strength was that "he endured as seeing Him who is invisible." This test of the spiritual sphere appears also by the personal testimony of the finest souls that they have been discovered themselves by something that the expert failed to discover.

As an illustration, consider that instance in the astronomical observatory, where the prepared plate was set in its place by the telescope, that the registry of the sidereal heavens might be made on it, the whole machinery keeping pace with the motion of earth and planet. Then the astronomer comes and finds upon the sensitized plate marks that he had not expected. Beside the photographed star and planet, he finds what he takes to be flaws and defects in the plate. He moves it away and puts another in its place for the next night's experiment, and the same flaws and defects are there, and so again and again until there is borne in upon him the conviction that something has looked *into* the instrument, and telegraphed its meaning and photographed its appearance, which the eye through the instrument could not discover. The realities which find you are the witnesses of God. Given a sensitive soul and God, all discoveries are possible. Given the sensitive eye in perfect condition and the external world, you may have a landscape of Corot or Rousseau. Given the sensitive soul and the spiritual sphere, you have this statement: "To this end was I born, for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

Revelation is Not Closed

STILL the word of Paul shall be our word: "Having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed and therefore did I speak; we also believe, and therefore we also speak." Revelation is not closed. "Much light shall yet break" upon the soul of man. So the soul shall stand and prophesy; send its love out to its ideal that it calls God; send its love out to its beloved that it holds just less than God; prophesy! sing! pray! find prayer the law of its being; find divine affections the sacrament of its days, and conscious that it has set up a commerce between what it is and what is for it, come to be what it now is by virtue of the celestial exchange.

The Soul's Initiative

THE will of God still is a corona of light about the soul's brightest day, and a luminous margin inviting it out beyond its best endeavor. What is its history? what are its claims? The first of all: *Every man may find God for himself.* For every one of us the guarantee of the revelation of God is that each man, standing alone, without book, without priest, without church, without creed, without anything—only God and the man together—shall find God for himself. That is the first condition. The next is that this soul that hath found God for itself—has *the right to its own discoveries and may not have them disputed by any man.* By virtue of its own

power to sail over unknown seas; and find its way, by virtue of its own power to land with firm tread upon its new-discovered realm, the soul has this right.

The Man of Conscious Power

I THINK of a man of business and of common duties, of unheroic and unpoetic days, to whom in some business transaction every appeal of self-interest is made; to whom every solicitation of worldly-wise friends is offered; to whom great opportunities present themselves tempting him to grasp with hands of passion that which never should be his, except as the crown of patience. All these influences are clamoring about him, like the cry of a mob, that he shall do this or that. What does he do? He moves like that simple Nazarene through the crowd at Nazareth who clamored about Him and would cast Him from the brow of the hill whereon the town was built. It is written: "He, passing through the midst of them, went His way." So this soul, pure in its purpose, strong in its struggle, conscious of having relation with Realities, goes its way which is not theirs.

If we would discover the ground of strength in any life, we must seek to know the terms in which the universe is interpreted by that life. If the life be genuinely strong, some effort to interpret the universe more or less completely will be found. Weak natures are content to drift from point to point, close-in-shore, but those who are strong, steering by some proved compass or by the heavens, venture out

upon the deep. They have abandoned themselves to the will of God and let themselves go upon life's tide with small care of what becomes of them. These are they who hear the voice: "Thou art my beloved son; in thee I am well pleased."

The Worth of the Human Spirit

BECAUSE a man can no longer calculate the relation which he has to that Infinity before whose eye a thousand years are as a single day, nor can measure his little stride with the march of the millenniums, he cries, "What is man that thou art mindful of him and the Son of man that thou visitest Him?" "I shall not be remembered," he says, "in the multitude of the creation." It is a mistake to suppose that when the fancy lies prostrate the reason is dethroned. It should stand erect over the prostrate fancy and work out the problem by which it is to be erected to self-respect. For the fact remains that the multitude of the immensities of the material world have nothing to do with determining the worth of the human spirit.

The Discoveries of the Soul

ASK you to contemplate the soul stuff out of which the kingdom of heaven on earth is built up. These souls have had their struggle; they are now at work upon the field they have conquered. What are the discoveries that they have made? First: that nothing saves a man but strength of soul. No

matter what urges him, from the moment he is aroused in the very depths of his being, there are but two paths open to him. The one leads to life by struggle, and the other leads to destruction by the abandonment of struggle. This is the soul's first discovery,—that work is the price of ease, that struggle is the price of victory, that pain is the price of comfort. And he accepts the terms the higher life proposes.

Another discovery the sincere soul makes is this: he is not to seek ease, or anticipate victory, or long for comfort. He has but one concern,—to address himself to his work with a perfect fidelity, to wage his battle with an unimpeachable loyalty, to bear his pain without rebellion, knowing that no more can be expected of him than this, whatever may be the outcome, he must keep the faith and covenant with his own nature to be true. He can not tell how his work will result; he can not tell whether the victory will be worth having when it is won. He does not know whether the comfort he will have will be permanent, or prove the prelude to new pain. All he knows is the momentary pressure and the instant struggle which engages him and he has the right to expect of himself an absolute sincerity.

Characteristics of the Strong

THE three characteristics of a strong, quiet soul are: first, a dedication of the whole nature to an honorable struggle: second, a sincerity that

is like white light in showing forth reality; third, a determined reference of obscure and vexing problems to the laws of life, so that incidents of experience become the commentary upon the principles which are the groundwork of character. Those who have these characteristics are the only ones who have a reason or the power to stand calm and strong before those who are still struggling with the woe of the world. As they stand in the presence of sorrow and suffering they are not indifferent,—by no means! Their faith is large; they believe that God is health and sanity and blessedness; they feel confident that God will pour his life yet more and more into these desert places of the world. Believing in God they labor looking up, not sorrowing “as those who have no hope.” The most splendid thing in the world is to see a soul in action, unencumbered, not self-inquisitive, not self-accusatory. You speak of a delicate piece of machinery, when its adjustment is perfect and its power is applied as being “in action.” The mind of man has never conceived anything so intimately intricate, so delicately poised, so marvelous in action, so multifarious in results, as the mind itself. To see a human soul in action under the impulse of a regnant purpose, that is chieftain for all the clans of the emotions, and regnant over all the rebellions of the nature, is to behold the most beautiful thing that God could make, behaving itself in the most beautiful way that it can discover.

The Organ of Spiritual Knowledge

IT is a wonderful process that goes on in the human mind, when the soul which thought it only had to be instructed—that the mind had only to be informed—all of a sudden realizes the conviction that man has an organ of spiritual knowledge, just as he has organs of sight and of hearing and of touch. The organ of spiritual knowledge is the power to select the thing that is noble enough to follow and to follow it to the end. In the process, things that were in doubt have arranged themselves; convictions that were conflicting have fallen into line; aims that were contradictory now seek the guidon to which they rally; uncertainties have fallen to quiet securities in the obedient mind. This is the picture of utter sincerity.

Celestial Attraction Greater than Earthly Gravitation

IN the statement of Paul, "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy" is meant all that range of things belonging to the lower nature, out of which we have come with infinite struggle until we achieve a moral sense, until we believe that we are spiritual beings. "God formed man of the dust of the ground" is the first chapter in his evolution. He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" suggests all other chapters of his evolution. You can make an earthy nature out of hand; but it takes the ages to create an immortal spirit. "He became a living soul." He is still becoming.

In the statement of John's epistle, the same splendid announcement is made, that we began on earth and were celestially attracted. However strong the pull to the center of the planet may be, the lift to the center of the heaven is greater. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

The Growth of the Soul to Full Stature

"A FULL-GROWN man, according to the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ." The purpose of this is not to make an angel nor a giant, it is not to make an exceptional creature but simply a "full-grown man," who in his measure, for his purpose, and in his place, shall be as full-grown, complete, sphered, and developed as "the anointed" of God was for his time and in his place. It is the imperative demand of nature that we shall not stop growing until we are grown. Whatever contributes to this is of value until the "body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." And the proof of "the truth spoken in love" is found in the body built up of love.

Who Would Find God Must Look Within

THE Christian world has been taught to lean on supports; upon the priest, who must have had a heart and a brain because constituted as men are; upon the Church as the organized institution of religion;

upon Scripture that was made within the human soul. The Spirit of God could make itself known only unto the soul of man. We have been taught to lean from the upright upon these subsidiary, supplementary, secondary supports, and so for the higher things we do not trust the nature of man, but expect by some magical process to have supplied from without what we trust as natural in every other department of human life. There is no without. He who would find God, must look within. Learn to believe the cry that comes from your own nature.

We Front the Stars

IF God is the only life; if all the processes of the world are the expression of his energy, He has been building through the generations, the millenniums, the likeness of Himself. There is nothing to make things out of but God. He is the Eternal Substance. It is not enough for Him to have made the sidereal universe. It is not enough for Him that He should have made the great panorama of earth's successive stages. When all the processes eventuate in the moral sense and a moral soul, there is nothing for it but to keep on until it reaches its source. Celestial gravitation is its destiny as earthly gravitation was its origin. Our feet are on the earth, but they are not fettered. Our place is upright, so that we may front the stars. Our spirits have an upward look and all their relationships have their permanence in being purged of the earthy and informed with the heavenly.

Our Destiny is Upward

WHEN it was said to Moses: "See that thou make all things according to the pattern that I showed thee in the mount," it was the invitation to make his highest moment permanent. It was the invitation to make the incidental and the occasional natural and continuous. It can only be achieved by informing each moment with a new meaning and perpetuating it for a reason other than exists in itself. The thing least regarded is inseparably related to all that is. Each thing is the threshold to some vast chamber to which we are invited; and each approaching avenue reveals a vista of wide sunlit spaces into which we are beckoned. Our destiny is upward. The lift is under us, so that there is no pressure in life that seems to the devout soul equal to the assurance that "underneath are the Everlasting Arms."

Life's Purpose

*Life is a long crawl upward, with no flags flying!
Do not wait till you get a good start. Appropriate
each vision, glimpse, belief, help, joy.*

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

WE seek to be near to God this hour. Thou art never far from every one of us, but we wrap ourselves about with disguises that do not belong to Thy children, and wall ourselves up in dreams, and separate ourselves from the nearness of God and the sweet companionableness of Thy spirit. We pray to be delivered from this folly and fault this hour, that we may know we have great rights in God, and high privileges in our Father's house, the world in which we live; that we may come to Thee unafraid, since Thou knowest us from the dust we were in Thy hand to the souls we are that speak Thy name. Thou knowest us altogether, why should we fear Thee, or hesitate to come unto Thee.

Give us a quiet spirit, that, however we may have sinned we may have peace, and however we may have gone astray, we may know Thou art unmoved except to follow us in every wandering. Accustom us to thinking of Thee as unchangeable in love as in power and to believing that we can not fret Thee to impatience, or separate ourselves from Thee by any barrier Thou canst not break through, or that Thou canst not burn away with the fervors of Thy love.

We pray that this hour may be sacred to us, that, as we read the lesson of the past we may make just application of it today; that we may feel

that we are priests and prophets of a holy religion, and may know what is the priesthood of the common life and the kingship of the sons of God.

We pray Thee for those who do not understand themselves and think they are not understood of men or of God. Grant them repose, and that they may wait patiently for Thee. Grant unto those that have special temptations that they may know nothing can touch them that hath not touched Thee first. Thou dost know them altogether. Take, O Lord, the unformed words of our lips and direct them in the impulses of our life, as they lie in the slow-moving of the physical being that Thou hast made, and direct to Thy wishes the purposes of our days.

Grant to all the worshipping families of the earth this day, the knowledge of the Kingdom of God that will surely come, the sense of Thy nearness. Accept us in Thy great mercy, and guide us by Thy holy spirit.

Amen.

There is Nothing to Fear

WHEN we are hit hard, we do not fall back in despair upon the intervention of high Heaven. We gird ourselves anew as one whose armor needs tightening for a future call. There is divine communion but it is not the frightened flight of the soul to God: it is rather what happens to the child that is hurt. He leans back against his mother, knowing that it does not cure the hurt, but it helps to bear the pain. There is nothing to be afraid of, not of God,—to be afraid of God is to be afraid of Love, for He is immediate and near and beautiful;—not of man are we afraid, for he is a fit antagonist whom we must conquer for truth's sake; either he is a good helper in the struggle, or else he is some dear, broken brother whom we must carry a little until he can stand alone. We are not afraid of life, for it is a splendid opportunity to prepare us to live forever. We are not afraid of death, for it does not hurt.

Discovering the Laws of Life

THE discovery of "the reign of law" made by modern science was long ago affirmed by the students of the soul's true life. Life can not be pieced together; *it is not a mosaic but a creation*. This power to discover the laws which control life is given to the man whose heart is set upon reality. The old condition still holds good, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." We sometimes think we will walk surely if we trust serenely to our aspirations

and faithfully heed the prophecy of our inmost spirit. Aspiration, indeed, keeps the head lifted and the affections ready for their upward flight. The laws of life come to experience by constant experiment: the secret is not revealed to us in our dreams. The Prince of Mystics said: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets. I come not to destroy but to fulfil."

It is thus always in the orderly development of a true revelation: the prophet stands on immutable law while he tells his vision. To the end of time, it shall be the law and the prophet—restraint and aspiration—which shall constitute the centripetal and centrifugal forces which hold sound life to its appointed orbit, true to its course, but true also to its center. Much power is wasted by forgetting that principles are the stuff that life is made of. We try to be consistent when, if we had once for all entered into an alliance with some law of life, each word and deed and thought would find its place obedient to this regnant law. All the contending, disturbing processes of thought and feeling find their place to him who has discovered a principle of action, a principle which his reason approves, history vindicates, and to which his affections can make a pure consecration of the best that is in him.

The Enrichment of Life

THE first business of life is to use life's functions so as to lead to the higher life. Verily, this

subtle thing we call life demands our best attention: that we shall enrich life, not enrich its circumstances simply; that we shall not simply gain knowledge but education—that is the distinction we must make in the field of mind; that we shall not simply have a flood of emotions, but a regulated tide of desire; that we shall not simply hold in the hand what the palsied hand must let fall, but hold in the human spirit what is part of the divine life of our souls with God.

What is it to Love God?

THE good man who loves God in a church is he who would be very much without God in the desert. The love of God is not a circumstance and in a certain sense is not an emotion. It is the *abandon* of the soul, as all love is that is worth the having. It is the projection of the entire nature upon its object, the passion that moves as a steady wind of desire, as a rising, unebbing flood of the tide. That is love: all else is its counterfeit. Is it your experience that you have loved God so? that what God counts good, you count good? If that be so, I think you will answer, "I also know that all things work together for good to them that love God." And however your love abandons itself to God, keep step! Move with His motions, be rhythmic to the beat of His life; let your pulse register the tides of His being, for He is "above all and through all and in you all."

The Right Emphasis in Life

YOU have not any business in life except the growing of a human soul; I do not say that this is the chief business; I say that this is the *only* business. Getting a living is incidental; being decently clad is incidental; gathering the household about you is incidental; pursuing some line of business enterprise is incidental; but the only thing essential with which you have to deal is that which enables you to say that from first to last, you have been steadily accumulating power in the center of being. That is the only business in hand, and the man who does not realize it has simply placed his emphasis in the wrong place in life. Nobody knows what the soul is; we only know how it behaves. Nobody knows what electricity is; we only know how it behaves. It behooves us to give as constant attention to the behavior of that which constitutes the soul as we do to some force of nature that we desire to enslave to do our errands.

The Three Great Announcements

WHAT is the sum total of effect of the good news that Christ proclaimed? It may be resolved into three elements. His first announcement was that *a human soul may be at one with God*. This is Christ's first good tidings; that coming up from the lowest condition, placed howsoever he may be, by whatsoever conditions environed, engaged in whatever task that is decent and good, a human soul may be en-

compassed by God, as a human body by its atmosphere. What did He say? "My Father is greater than I," and immediately, "I and My Father are One." It was the statement that moral coalescence between the God who made him and the being whom He made was possible and that our wills might march with His, keeping step; and our love might flame towards His, until it joined the great, purifying conflagration of His affection.

The second great announcement in Christ's gospel is the good news of the *self-sacrifice that is native to the soul that is at one with God*. I imagine that in some way that great self-abnegation out of which the worlds were made, that surrender of God's life that came into blazing planets at their birth, is felt by the consecrated soul who gives himself to the creation of divine things in life. This power in man to give himself away is the correlative of that function that is peculiar to him, that in all creation alone he may be disobedient. So also in all creation he alone may give himself away. The human soul at one with God has the power to bestow itself as God bestows Himself upon the world. The soul is not a cistern dug to be filled by reluctant rains; it is a living fountain fed from the high hills of God.

The third great announcement in Christ's good news is *the supremacy of the human spirit above all its conditions*. It is said, "we are sons of God." It is not enough that I shall mark my little round, making the circle of my tiny span of life, and lying down to be forgotten in the dust. I want to live for-

ever with Him whose life I share and who, having brought me into being, can not repudiate me now if He would. By virtue of a kinship that is his own, I claim my rights in God. This is the great deliverance of the spirit's power over all its circumstances, its lift above its conditions, the fact that it is not blind but may see; that it is not simply bruised against its limitations but may be set at large; that it is not simply captive with the manacles of some untoward circumstance but that it may look heavenward until it can mount hither.

The Soul's Consecration

SINCE this gospel of Christ is good news indeed, there is only one thing for you and me to do; to tell the good news to every man we meet, either in lives of grace and goodness or in speech, that shall not so much intrude as it convinces and persuades. The consecration of the human soul is the purpose of our days. The news is so good that it becomes a test of the complexion of our days. Is the thing you are doing keeping you from that union of God which is the soul's estate? Is the thing you are doing or the circumstances that surround you hindering you from bestowing yourself upon others than yourself? Is the thing you are doing or are the circumstances that confront you preventing the soul's lift above its condition? Then by that test know that for you the judgment is set, the decision is rendered; that thing which you are doing is not of God. It is

the test of our behavior that we show ourselves fit messengers of God's good news.

The Uses of Liberty

ALL the world is ours to use, and growing out of this conviction in the human mind arises the fact that our liberty is not construed now in terms of freedom but in terms of power. What is the use of strength?—to turn into work. The man who simply exhibits his strength as an athlete is entertaining; but he can not be considered permanently useful until he puts it into the world's work. His strength is to lift, to push, to lead, to rally the weak by the strength of the strong and to help them, where unled, they dare not go. What is the use of liberty? Liberty is for the sake of life, power, holiness, devotion. We must be free that we may be *all* that we can be,—not simply *free*.

The horse that is running in the field, unbroken,—the floating mane and streaming tail and the fine action of the clean limbs and glossy sides,—is beautiful in his freedom of movement, but the poor cab-horse is doing the work of the world infinitely better by comparison, because he has learned to go in harness. We must be free in order that we may put ourselves under conditions. By the limitations of the old religion we were prescribed conditions under which we might work another's will; but now we have learned that the use of liberty is for the sake of power and freedom and force for the world's work,

by the use of *our own wills*. The will of God is reflected in the nature of each man as His revealing to that man, whose answering will turns its power on the world's work.

A man knows whether he is a clean man or not. He knows whether he is dealing with things in a shifty way or not. He knows whether he is shuffling and shifty in the attitude he has toward life. It is not worth while for a man to live who has a debate with himself forever, who has to arrange all the things he has ever said or thought before he can say the next thing. That is a farce without being interesting. The secret of the directness of Jesus was that He had no debate with Himself. When they said to Him, "Shall we pay tribute to Caesar or no?" He said, "Show me a coin." They showed Him a denarius. He said: "Whose image is this?" They said "Caesar's." Then He said, "Render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's."

The Passion for Righteousness

BEGIN by putting the emphasis in life where it belongs, in due proportion. Begin by dealing with yourself in terms of absolute sincerity, and then add to that a passion for righteousness that shall leave you a believer in the essential righteousness of the universe. A passion for righteousness is the very essence of faith,—a faith that is represented in the Beatitude as "hunger and thirst for righteousness."

Looking back over the century that has been a century of emancipation, fronting the century of promise, give the weight of your faith to the idea of being faithful; give the emphasis of your mind to the Ultimate Reality that is the sum and substance of the life of the universe; give your love and labor to that; believe at least one thing profoundly and follow it to the end.

We can not commit our work to God without getting a firmer, two-handed grip on it ourselves. We can not cast our work in the world on God, however heavy for us or how little. We need never cease to pray, but also "we must work the works of Him that sent us, while it is day." If any divine help is to reach us, it must be brought to us at work. At most, we may stand like the peasants in Millet's picture, taking their hands from the implements of their humble labor only to rest a moment and bow their heads, while the angelus rings out over the fields of toil.

Not the Work, but the Worker

IT is not the work done in the world which has first consideration, but fulfilling our destiny as workers in the world. It is a fine declaration of Carlyle: "Work out that thing which God hath wrought in thee." There is no obligation laid upon you to do a great work, but to do the greatest that you can. Our work is not necessary to the world; there is that in us of greater worth,—ourselves. What is demanded is not our work but *us*, in all our powers. We are to

hold back no part of the price when we bestow ourselves on the life of our time.

By painful growth, by slow degrees, we get our view; and it is not simply a delight to the soul which apprehends it, but it is an opening for work given to the soul that has anything to do in God's world. This is the story of the mystic and the practical Christian. The mystic sees the vision and is absorbed by it; and the man of applied religion sees it and takes up his burden and goes to make it his own. It is said of Jesus that He came back, after He had healed the sick and spoken the good news of God to the little town where He had been brought up, and called his dear mother and the household together and they all went into the synagogue. Here He took the old record and opened it for the lessons of the day, and said, "I have come, as my custom is, into the synagogue on the Sabbath and I read to you the word of Isaiah, 'The spirit of the Lord God is upon me.' " He could catch and hold the evanescent and make it permanent—the conscious presence of the spirit of the Living God.

Religion An Experience

WITH devotion to truth, with the adoration of goodness, with the endeavor for character that is safe because it is sound, we come to those who are struggling. What is the exaction upon them? There are just three particulars. The first is that religion is an experience and not a theory. It is a conscious,

deliberate, constant realization of communion between the soul and God. If that were not known by thousands in all the churches, then the Church would have ceased to be effective. The second particular is in the fact that responsibility is focused on man. *The system that relieves man of responsibility defrauds him of moral power.* The third is that you shall look out for the other man. There is no room for anyone who is self-centered and focused on his own affairs.

The Sacrament of Service

YOU are not free until you are free to give yourself to the communion and help of those who need your help. I can not conceive of any better than Jesus of Nazareth; yet, "as his custom was, He went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath day" and interpreted the Word of God unto those who waited to hear. When you get so strong you can stand up straight, you are strong enough to help some crooked person straighten himself. When you are so firm on your feet, that you go on your own path unassisted, take somebody else by the hand and lead him. When your vision is clear, let your ministry be to the purblind people of the world with whom your association now becomes, not a duty, but a vast privilege and a great delight. No man is free and large and strong to whom the sacrament of service and the association with the less strong has not come to be a dear delight of his daily life.

The Love of the Other

THERE is no room in life as in nature,—where everything is related and nothing stands alone,—there is no room for the man who is only taken up with himself. “Thou shalt love the other as thyself.” I doubt whether any human being ever knows God in any saving and powerful way who has not known man in some intimate and sympathetic way.

It is true of all life that the radiance and joy of our inner experience is in the very ratio in which we entertain high ideals. The human soul that in a large, strong, intimate, and real way deals with things as they are, because the soul is struggling toward God, finds its heaven here and its divine communion lasting.

The Search for Truth

THERE is a very good definition given of the true, the good, the beautiful. “The true is what is, the good is what ought to be, the beautiful is what is as it ought to be.” How far we are from demanding *what is*—rather asking to hear what we can bear, to see what we ought to gaze upon, to walk by paths that are safe. When we realize this, then the passion for truth comes as an almost impossible ideal. And yet the fact is the only infallible thing in the world. The search for the thing that *is*, as to the soul, as to soul’s endeavor, as to the will of God, as to character, makes a demand that is difficult, if our interest is in the living of the higher life. The higher life is the human life; carried to infinite

extension, you get Christ; carried to its infinite possibilities, you get the humanity of God.

The New Worship

FOR the most of us God's outdoors in the open weather is good enough and we need neither heaven nor hell of the old proportions, nor yet a God of the old, revolting type, "to make us feel." The eternal compassion, the unfailing goodness of God, is not enthroned remotely and alien from man; it is simply in the world of rational faith; kindled in all its emotions by unfailing affection, it is enthroned in every worshipping heart. A new deity needs a new worship, so much larger is the fact of God; and prayer must take on an adoration which the old type of supplication would not allow; and praise must sound in terms so great that its old feebleness shall seem like the plaintive echo of spirits in prison longing for light.

The Effort of Growth

WHY should the apprentice make infinite blunders in his craft? Why should the artist struggle through years of preparation? Why should the medical student find the utmost difficulty in getting anybody to let him make his experiment? Why should any of the crafts and skills of life come only by infinite struggle, outlay of effort, mind and exertion the most strenuous and insistent, and why should the religious life, which is the science of manhood, the splendid achievement of the human soul,—why

should the religious life come easy to people who six days out of the week are plunged in a bog of daily duties, and come out on Sundays to sun themselves for an hour?

The Tone of the Instrument

WE must see to it that we have due regard to the wholesomeness and soundness of our own natures. It is too much said that we must not think about ourselves, but live a free, natural life. This is the inevitable reaction from that older habit of morbid self-examination. We are told that we must lead our lives the best we can. But how are we to know what is the best we can, without some self-knowledge? There must be self-examination, not morbid, but sincere; not with eyes turned upon ourselves alone, but turned also upon the high standards of ideal character. As it is the business of a man to see to it that he is in good health, so he must have a care of the temper and tone of his nature; for his usefulness will more depend upon the tone of his mind than on anything his mind is likely to produce besides. The instrument in the musician's hand may be of material selected with greatest care by the maker, but it is for the player to see that it is well strung.

The Simple Best

“SHE hath done what she could,” said Jesus of Mary. The grace and beauty of her simple act had come to her as a possession of the soul, while

she sat at the feet of the Divine Teacher. When plans fail, when disappointments intervene, when ambitions come to nothing, what can console a man better than to have it said, that he did what he could? And what can reduce our false standards to reason, or make our plans accord with what is natural, or set our will in harmony with that great Will—what, in a word, can so sustain a man's endeavor, and tide him over the risk of failure, as to be in very truth intent upon a complete self-development? Then nothing shall be able to dull the temper of the soul, nor make his tone ring false. Such a task is becoming to the sons of God.

A New Attitude Toward Life

LET us not be too anxious to enter by that door only over which is written, "Know thyself!" Nor may we be terrified as by some vision which speaks to us as the oracle of Oedipus, "Mayst thou never know the truth of what thou art!" Nor will we stand fronting Nature and only say,—

"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,—
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand, little flower.
But *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is!"

When the naturalist has pulled the flower up by the roots, he has not discovered that which fed the roots. There is a more excellent way. The Beloved Son in the moment his soul was torn with the agony

of coming death, said: "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

The Larger Life

WE would be "clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." The purpose of this day and hour, and every day and hour, is to live the larger life; so that little by little, more and more, there shall pass upon us that subtile change in which the carnal shall be transfigured by the spiritual; in which the mighty gusts of even our basilar passions shall be led up to new uses. As common air can be transformed into music when the instrument is fit, so from the ground of our nature where we begin, we ascend to higher levels, where mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

Workers with God

"MY Father worketh hitherto, and I work," must be the motto of His children, in a world as yet incomplete. Surely there is fine work to be done by those who will be "laborers together with God." It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do. It is not true that any earnest and religious man works alone. How can one work alone in a universe which God fills? From that first struggle within humanity, out of which the moral sense arises to that finest revelation of God as love, which is the hope of the world, there is one palpitating Creative Energy carrying forward the triumphs of the truth. Let us

jealously covet some share in the purpose of great souls and their great Ally! "I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee."

To the Glory of God

THERE is a way of doing business "to the glory of God," and if it is not done in that way it is a reproach to the man of affairs. Who gave you the mind with which to think? Who gave you the heart with which to feel and the energy with which to achieve great enterprises of the business world? There is but one source,—it is by the inspiration of the eternal Spirit that you have all these things. Shall you trade for yourself and "dicker" for yourself? Shall you indulge in the petty immorality of business for yourself? No man who is worthy to bear the name that Channing or Theodore Parker or James Martineau bore can fail to see that he is serving God at his counting-house as he is serving God in the church.

The Perfect Will

HOW often the definitions of things have changed! How often theories have been revised! How the constant visions have shone on, while men speculated beneath the stars! How the constant tides have risen and fallen, while our little ships went out to sea and found their graves, often in the deep, and the relentless tides rolled on! How the constancy of the world, how the order of its march, how all things that change not, await our discovery

and are patient for our coming! Whenever we try life's meaning, the Will that underlies it is patiently abiding our coming. With added reverence the same mind, instructed this way, says "the perfect and adorable Will of God."

Seekers After God

MEN turn to the ideal to save themselves, that they may not solidify to the center. They dream dreams and see visions; and it will ever be written of each successive era, "In that day I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions, and upon my sons and upon my daughters will I pour out My Spirit." So that human nature is at one perpetual task, the inquisition of the universe to know what it means. It has been kept at its task by the idealizing tendency of human nature, by virtue of which we have passed out of the brute condition into the human and seek more and more as we aspire to be human souls.

Disloyalty, the Worst Word

WE have as fundamental to our thinking the idea that every man's life is a plan of God. This is not an atheistic world; it is not a world in which any part of our work can be done alone. The great purpose of life is to do with contentment whatever the Divine Will appoints. It is of no concern at all what you do; but the manner and style of doing it are of great concern. I am only concerned that it be

something that shall be creditable to my Maker. The honor of the Maker is in the hands of his creatures; the dreadful thing about sin is not simply that it is sinful, not at all that it shall be punished—no noble man who sins, even by mistake or indirection, would wish to escape his punishment or have any one else pay his debt—the dreadful thing is that a being, who was made in the image of God, and into whose keeping God put his work, should be disloyal—the worst word in the language!

Seeing what He Sees

WHEN we attain the height where Jesus stands, what shall we do? We shall gaze a moment on the beauty of His face, and then we shall try to catch the secret of the transfiguration. They said who companied with Him: "Lord, it is good for us to be here: And let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses and one for Elias," scarce waking from their sleep. He roused them from their dreaming and took them down where, frothing and writhing, the insane child lay in its father's arms. The transfiguration is not for ourselves alone, but for the sake of those who need our light. We come down with Him, having seen what He sees and felt what He feels. This it is to know the secret of Jesus Christ.

The Peaks of Abstraction

WHEN thought lets go the hand of the "Infinite Ally," then it is no longer robust; and like the

great forest of the stuff that things are made of, it may blossom, or cling as the vine clings to the rocks, against the wind; or may spread itself over the hard facts of existence, soft as the moss over the rocks. But at last life and vigor can do no more, and the cold peak of a cheerless speculation, giving no sign of life, surmounts all, and death reigns supreme. From such heights of sheer abstraction we sometimes hear a cry, and know not whether it be the articulate speech of a living man or the call into the deeps of space of a human spirit that has lost God. As thought climbs its heights, as it gains wider outlook, it must go hand in hand with the recognition of its infinite relationships. The consciousness must penetrate it of that Eternal "with whom we have to do."

No Escape from Life's Problems

"ON every height there lies repose." In the deep places of life there is peace. But the way to the height is arduous, and the way to the depths is stifling and storm-beaten. We must gird ourselves for a hard climb if our way is upward; and if we would go below the surface of life, we must submerge ourselves in the affairs of our kind. We must know the soul's most intimate life and share its real experiences. To refuse to do this brings a temporary peace,—a respite from struggle but it brings an accumulating burden which will fall upon the empty life when its strength is gone and joy is dead. *Let no one suppose that life's problems give us up because we refuse them attention.* The solution awaits

us, however long delayed and will be complicated by the perplexities growing out of our own neglect. If we do not judge ourselves and control our life, we will be called before an inexorable tribunal in some moment of crisis and may find, under a searching inquisition, that we have forgotten the language in which true souls make answer at such times.

Confronting the Unexpected

ONE of the sure indications of the will of God in an ordered world is found when we are confronted by a condition we have not procured; which we have not invited nor laid plans for. When such a condition presents the sheer, abrupt sides of a cliff on which is no footing—only a bird could wing its way above them and perch afar—then let us lift up our hearts, for lo, here is the will of God. There is nothing else to do, and if you are a living man, in God's name, do that. The sooner we accept the conditions that are inevitable as part of the Will that can never be unkind, the sooner we will organize out of our defeats victory and out of our dismembered thinking a better philosophy of life.

The Inevitable Choice

SOMETIMES the will of God comes as an inevitable choice. Then the inconsistency of our minds appear in that we are discontented that we have to choose, and we say: "If somebody would only tell us which course to follow." The pleasant things flaunt themselves and the stern, long deter-

mined course is on the other side. The allurements are on this side and the obligations there. I have made my covenant concerning certain fidelities, certain obligations growing out of the relationships of life and this covenant constitutes the standard of an inevitable choice. When that choice is made, it is to be remembered that a man has to answer to himself, and it is an awful thing to be on bad terms with one's self.

The will of God sometimes follows an inevitable course. It does not appear to us as the will of God. It just appeals as the bare necessity of life. Now what shall we do in the face of it? Most people answer: "There is only one thing I can do. I thought I was a free agent but here I am face to face with an inevitable course." What they ought to do is to thank God that there is only one way; for they are saved the perplexities of cross-roads when there is just one trail that stretches before them though it seems to end in a morass or a sheer cliff. It may be when the cliff is reached it will go gently over the edge to other levels that seem precipices from afar.

The Passion for Self-Respect

THAT man can not go far wrong in the integrity of his thinking with whom self-respect is a passion. Self-respect is not consistent with beggary, self-respect is not consistent with folly, self-respect is not consistent with prodigality; it is only consis-

tent with the rounded and sphered condition of the soul in its integrity. My first business is with myself because my last business is with myself; and the man who ignores the claims of his own nature to be heart-whole and strong, has to live with that unformed thing, that deformed thing which he has produced. Our errand however far afield it goes must be an errand of one loyal to the powers of his own nature.

The Power to Bestow Ourselves

THE power to give ourselves to something, to bestow ourselves, not only argues teachableness but is the instrument of courage for the rest of the world. It is a great thing to be able to take people at their best. There is always a best in every human creature. The people that are impossible are of the fewest possible. They may be difficult; so is the passage across the morass from tussock to tussock where the foothold may be gained; but when you get beyond the submerged land, you are in the full current of the river. There is no morass without some stream running near: so there is always a best in every human creature. The purpose of life is heartening one another, putting ability to go on into a discouraged spirit, and nothing serves so well as an appreciation and admiration that is as delicate as it is sincere; and as kind, as it is patient.

“We are saved by our admirations.” What is meant by the power of admiration? It involves first that function which marks our humanhood, the

power to give ourselves away, to let ourselves go. Man's distinctive function is the bestowal of himself. He is not simply a savings-bank of energy; he is a bank of deposit for temporary safety, until he can draw upon himself for the uses of life. The business of the strong man is not to show his form, but to lift. The business of the wise man is not to show his mind, but to teach. The business of the good man is not to wait for his halo, but to go out and distribute whatever goodness he has at command, suspecting very little in himself of good. The business of life is distribution; and admiration is the sign of the capacity in us to do that. Our center of gravity is not in ourselves but in any other whom we admire.

The Investment of Power

THE whole attitude of life, to save yourself from loss of power, is to invest power in some other human life or some thing. The soul's business is to wait and hear what the Lord will speak, and He speaks by every admirable thing in life. "Man shall not live by bread alone" said the great Master of the art of living, "but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," and his accent is multi-form, his emphasis various, his dialect infinite, and the terms of his persuasion every admirable thing in life. We are to be taught when we think upon anything that is lovely and gracious: "If there be any virtue or any praise, think on these things!" I assure you I revered the woman who was crying

herself sick before Dore's picture of Christ leaving the Praetorium. To me it was impressive; to her it was absorbing as she gave herself up to love and sacrifice.

"The Way is Narrow"

THERE is that constant problem,—my own being and its meaning. I can not deny I am. I ought not to be careless what I am to become. The forces of circumstance, passion, and nature, are plying me on all sides. One must be curiously exempt from the common lot, if these forces do not present the risk of degradation to him or constitute the challenge to virtue. The task of self-development is set us; the responsibility of moral influence is laid upon us; the fact of sin obtrudes itself through all the disguises of feeling. Each must say to himself, it is certainly true that I am a man beset with temptation, crippled by limitations, arraigned by moral duties, and confronted by daily tasks. Is there nothing in this to make a human soul struggle? The way is narrow which leadeth unto life!

The Risk of Enterprise

IT is not my purpose to make the impression that I regard life as a sad reality. It can only be this when no human love is at work upon it to make it better and stronger and sweeter. To the man who knows its value it is an opportunity, a joy, and a privilege; but we need not take our joys superficially.

They are not like cut flowers, but like plants rooted well and pledged to a constant bloom in their season of bloom. Life is a great deep, and its resources are discovered to those who do not fear to launch out into it. A man must be willing to take some risks who would find a path in the deep. Enterprise has its risks as well as its rewards. Moral enterprise, no less than that which enlists so much of our strength and intellect, must take all life in its hand, ready to lay it down.

Religion

Religion and Life must not be two things. Life to be worth while must have Religion; and Religion to be worth while must be translated into terms of practical living.

PRAYER FOR COMMUNION

WE come, O God, to worship before that great love that hath called us children and taught us to say, "Our Father." O give to Thy children to know the great rights they have in Thee, and what unfailing love from Thee. May the faithfulness from God inspire our fidelity and the passions of God toward us awake in us compassion for the world of God that waits upon our effort. Grant to us that we may be like Thee, not simply find Thee like to the thing we think, and that we may grow more and more to serve the great ideals that have their realization in Thee. Grant unto us such appreciation of Thy great hospitalities, such consciousness of the unbounded goodness of God,—the eternal goodness,—that we shall find ourselves in the fellowship and communion of God.

Let Thy people in every place this day gain some access to Thee that shall mark a new growth in them, gain some nearness to that great center of light that shall cause their darkness to disappear. May those who are weary rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Thee, and those that sit under the shadow of bereavement know there is no death with the living God, and those that have burdens that seem more than they can bear cast their care upon the Lord, so that they and the burden may be carried together.

Grant in this hour the cleansing of our eyes and sanctification of our affections. Let all those that have need of Thee know Thee near, and all those that have wandered hear Thy voice saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." So let our heaven descend, and all our wants be met, and all the longing of our hearts, like a prayer, be also like gladness, in the consciousness that Thou hearest us always. Bring Thy kingdom, and let Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Amen.

New Motives for Religion

THE new motives for religion shine by contrast with the old motives, in that the religion of today repudiates fear. Love, casting out fear, grows to fill the place which was occupied by fear and turns to do the duties which fear could not do. It is not afraid of life, for it is not so much a probation or a discipline as it is an opportunity and a delight. It is not afraid of life's tenderest and purest relationships, "for in their face do we behold the Eternal." It is not afraid of the consequences of sin; for since they can not be escaped or evaded in any world, religion declares for life dedicated to the will of God. Of sin it is afraid as one might fear a wild creature not yet tamed. When upon our common life fall its common sorrows, we do not fear that the hand of God is on us. We rather believe that underneath us are "the everlasting arms" and we "commit our souls in well-doing unto Him as unto a faithful Creator."

Thus the man whose religion has become a daily dedication to the will of God has put away from him, as irreligious in themselves and tending to irreligion, all motives that are grounded in self-interest and in distrust of the order of God's world; all motives that are simply regulative and a compromise with the weakness of the baser nature; all motives that shut the soul away from immediate communion with the fatherhood of God; all motives which separate and estrange the brothers of the race;

all motives which separate life into secular and sacred, present and future, earthly and heavenly. The man who thus dedicates himself to the religion of today finds in its newer, clearer, stronger motives abundant compensation for what may seem a loss to those less devoted to reality. This is the religion of Jesus of Nazareth; this is the experience of the soul.

The Rightening of Wrong

FIRST of all, religion declares its object to be the adjustment of human relationships, "the making of the world a better place to live in." It is first ethical, then spiritual. It finds more of God in the rightening of wrong than in the mystic reveries of a secluded sanctity. For this reason in all the churches the life of the Man "who went about doing good" places the beautiful pictures of the Beatitudes so constantly before reverent eyes that already the pure in heart begin to see God, and to see Him unconfused by any theory of his being or conflict of his attributes. Religion is so busy bringing in the kingdom of man, making it, as the Son of man declared it should be, the very kingdom of heaven, that we have been much turned away from settling nice questions of the administration of God in this world and the destiny of God's children in any world. We have thus put the duty of religion into the present tense, and have made the "stern daughter of the voice of God" more than the echo which it must be to the Pharisee of any age.

The Inner Eye

A CONVICTION of reality is one source of the inspiration of the prophets and the scriptures of the past. These prophets had power to deal with things that were "not seen," as though they were still within experience. They spoke of the inner eye; they declared that the eye which sees is not the eye of the Seer; but that the inner eye is fixed upon that which is more evident to it than any demonstration to sight. There is to the prophet's eye an appearance that does not appear to the common man; as in the definition of Martineau: "The prophet is the man who has discovered to what heights of divinity he must look up, and upon what adamantine manhood he must take his stand." The sense of reality made the prophet the real man. It is his sense of reality of the unseen which appears in that statement with respect to Moses that "he endured as seeing Him who is invisible."

Character is the Test of Religion

THE test of a religion is in the character it produces by virtue of what the soul gets out of it. The Fatherhood of God, infinitely fatherly; the sense of communion that nothing can interrupt; the experience of heaven here and now; the consciousness of the forgiveness of sins, which has been provided for between the soul and God, with no mediator between;—these are elements that are easily transmuted into character, for their very essence involves the

sense of personal responsibility. The test of religion is to be found in the character it produces *by virtue of what is believed*.

The Reality of the Unseen

THE inspiration of religion in the past which bred prophets and made scriptures is due to the fact that between this reality of the unseen and the man himself, this inspired man could establish a relation. He was not simply a looker-on at realities: he established divine relationships. So that his history was not simply his story of that which was in plain sight, but that which also he felt. Besides this, there was in the prophet of old a power of abandon to these realities. The whole relationship of the man to his environment, of function to its field of exercise was, in the prophet, a sense of God. Not only was this true, but there was an abandon—a letting one's self go—to the full currents of religious inspiration.

The New Inspiration

WHAT is the new inspiration for religion? It is a call to communion with God. We read now with a meaning more intense and beautiful than ever before that splendid One Hundred and Thirty-ninth Psalm:

“Whither shall I go from thy spirit?

Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there;

If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me.
If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me;
Even the night shall be light about me:
Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee,
But the night shineth as the day."

The splendid reality of the soul's experience is found in a more intimate communion and deeper sense of God.

If religion does not add zest to life, then it fails so far. All people who understand religion as adding zest to life, put their lives into the world; they do not simply put the world into their lives. There is no relation between a ship and a barnacle. The only thing to do with the ship after the voyage, is to bring her into the dry dock and scrape the bottom and leave these parasites of the sea on the dry land where they will die. All non-producers for the common weal are simply stuck on to the world's progress—carried, dragged about.

Since religion is nature at her highest and human nature at its best; since religion is a passionate devotion to the will of God, and finds that Will written on every page of the Book of Life, it is not something that is to comfort me when I am at my lowest; it is something to hearten me when I am at my busiest. Religion is not a raft shoved out to a sinking man, but it is the clothing of the mind;

it is the blood which goes through the veins; it is the heart of courage that is beneath all other things; it is the zest of every day's experience. Thus there is a distinct heightening of the courage of the human soul under the new inspiration of religion. The splendid courage of modern thought concerning God is embosomed in the thought that this universe, which is Himself, flames with that Inner Life which we have discovered to be the light of God. So the man who believes in God in the terms of the modern thought says, there is nothing in God's world to be afraid of. And of the future, his utterance is such a word as Emerson's, "All that I have seen of God's work, in the world, leads me to trust for that I have not seen." No wonder he was so assured. Let me call to mind the things you do not understand, and then say whether you will give them up.

Workers Together with God

RELIGION is no longer a secret told to a few which, under proper conditions, they may tell to a few more. But now, under the open heaven, in the undimmed light of God, in a world so large that more than a billion worlds are known to modern thought, infinitely extended in space, indefinitely extended in time, marvelously elevated in cause, the man of God waits to hear God's will. He is confident that in a world so crowded he shall not be forgotten, since now there is a divine Providence that is the Soul of the atom as well as the Creator of the

man. He is sure that in a world where all "are workers together with God," he shall not be idle; for fit work waits for him, being fit to do it. He is sure that he need not carefully and niggardly stint himself in his activities, for there is a commission to the humblest and the greatest to promote the work of God.

Religion a Personal Experience

I BELIEVE in God, but that is not enough. I must *believe God*: that is personal relationship. When we speak into the ear of the Most High, we are not crying into the void. All definitions of philosophy are incomplete. The relationship between the soul and God is a relationship that must be personally realized, personally believed. No knowledge of tradition is a substitute for it, and no delight in tradition can take its place. Nothing that any human soul can do but the abandon of itself unto the Infinite can be called in any sense the passage from traditional religion to religion that is personal. Religion is not a theory but an experience. Religion is not a guess but a certainty. There are theories manifold but they are not religion. The soul is an explorer for reality and its exploration is its experience and its experience is its life: this is religion.

To teach religion is not to teach its definitions. Can not the living soul that knows a thing show how it knows it without defining the terms in which

it knows it? The prescription is not the medicine; the theory is not the fact; the definition is not religion. I do not say that definition is not useful. I do not say that when you want to draw a line around things, you have not to define them; but the survey of a field can not be a substitute for the crop you can get out of it. To teach religion but one thing is to be considered, namely, the giving of direction to the temper and spirit of the taught. It involves a crystalline sincerity. This is the first step. It involves an ear hospitable to every voice that has anything to say that means good—this implies a teachable spirit, an open-minded hospitality so that light may enter into the mind.

Religion is not a theory; it is an experience. Its definitions are theoretical; but men do not live in definition. Men fight over definitions; they grow rabid about definitions. The only corrective to that insanity is the common experience of divine realities. Men understand one another who speak the language of the spirit, who never could understand each other when speaking the language of speculative theology. Men understand one another who can pray together; just as men with the blazon of the cross before them marched from every part of Europe, speaking every language of the western world, to rescue the sepulcher of Christ. They fulfilled the splendid phrase of one of the Fathers of the Church who speaks of the "expulsive power of a great affection."

The Creeds or the Beatitudes

THERE is not in any creed, so far as I know, a statement of personal religion. I do not know in one of them anything that can be paralleled with the Beatitudes which deal with life and its blessedness. The creeds deal with thought and its accuracy; and between the blessedness of life, the beatitude of experience, and accuracy of statement, there is all the difference between the rosy child that is so full of life your arms can scarcely hold him while you love him, and the placid and statuesque perfection of the dead. "The soul divines what is divine" translated into our modern statement becomes, "*That is inspired which inspires.*" It is our relationships that matter. Better give one's self absolutely to worship than to be eminently wise about idols and go from one pedestal to another until one's fancy is pleased. That is not worship—that is not devotion; that is not religion.

"Man for God"

A CONDITION contributing to religion is a sense of common purpose, namely, "man for God" as the instrument of his manifestation, as the medium in which He works. Does the sculptor take the clay; does the painter take the pigments; does the musician wish for his instrument; does the great violin-maker say God could not make it without him? "We are workers together with God." We are not the only product of God's creative power, for He has

never stopped creating, has never completed what He was doing. He has left us some little fragments of work that we may do in a world which is not yet finished. If the universe is not yet finished, it behooves us to have a share in the making of it. Every shiver of an earthquake is testimony to the cooling of the planet not yet cooled enough for man's safety. We have our contribution to make; and religion that is not "man for God" has missed one essential element in it.

Religion is not Easy

NOT only must the student of religion have a crystalline sincerity and a teachable spirit, but earnestness. Men demand easy religion. Nothing else is easy in life. Ask a man what anxieties corrode his mind, what solitudes perplex him, what embarrassments impede him. He will tell you there is no life that is easy, and it ought not to be. As in the natural world, the struggle is the process of survival, so in the moral world, it is "struggle of soul that saves." Finally, there must be an unselfish devotion. Without teachableness, we have no advance; without sincerity, we have no self-knowledge; without earnestness, we have no momentum; without unselfish devotion, we have no usefulness. Whatever you acquire in the name of religion is only taken to your mint to be put into the current coin of the realm. It must go into circulation thereafter.

I have no interest in easy religion. Easy thinking

is apt to be foolish thinking. Easy ethics is either morals turned loose, not tightened as to the purpose, or else it is *small moralities*. There is a great mass of people in the congregations of the Christian churches who are best satisfied when there are being peddled out to them small moralities. The religious life should be difficult in its thinking, difficult in its purpose, difficult in its struggle to the point where it is victorious in some phase of experience and from that time on that phase of it, at least, becomes easy. The religious life, to be worth while, ought to be difficult, not because it is unnatural, or supernatural, but because it is natural.

The Impact of Personality

THE teaching of religion depends, most of all, upon the impact of one nature upon another. Over and over again, teachers in Sunday School say: "I remember a teacher whom I had in my early boyhood or girlhood. I can not remember more than her name. I do not remember anything that she ever taught me; but somehow or other, she made me believe that God was real and that God was known to her." That is the impact of one spiritual nature on another. That is essential in the teaching of religion. The most brilliant discourse is as vain as the most flippant language, unless the discourse carries with it the sense that the man has contact with divine realities;—the Fatherhood of God, the leadership of Jesus; the dignity of human nature; the direct approach of the soul to God, immediate and alone.

Root, Flower and Fruit

WHERE a man gives his best and bestows himself utterly; where he converts his best into the coin that is current, for the uses of his life, there he worships. Religion, in its essence, realizes its aspirations in worship, and its obligations in obedience to law. It has its root in human nature, its flower in human emotions, its fruit in human conduct. Its end is the regeneration of society, in which the full-grown man shall appear as the normal product.

The Invisible made Visible

RELIGION deals with reality. There must be an ultimate reality. We not only live in a world of effects, but we live in a world of ordered being which argues a design in its structure that can not be of itself. God has ordered it that we shall not fly but walk, and a step at a time; that we shall see the things invisible through the lens by which they are made visible; and just as we turn the telescope into the blank fields of space where no stars appear to the naked eye, and they then hang out to our eye blazing worlds, so the whole reality of the world shows to us through the medium of the things that are. "The invisible things of God since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity."

Elementary Principles

THE soul belongs at home with God. The soul is an effect that argues a cause that is like itself. Does it love? Then it was born of love. Does it think? Then thought is the mother-stuff of which it was made. Does it struggle? It is only pulsing with the life that is in the world and never ceases its pulsations. You hark back ever from the struggle of the soul to its source in God. Why do I recite these elementary principles of the philosophy of religion? Because I come across people over and over again to whom religion is a theory and not a reality; to whom it is a tradition and not an experience; to whom religion is an experiment of which they soon grow weary; to whom religion looks for its authority to some good man, or good word, or good service or good impulse within the soul, and does not follow it back to its source in God.

The Ultimate Reality

THE business of religion is to realize God, and in terms of that realization register the relationships of life. To realize God,—not to speculate about God; not to theorize about God. The business of religion is to make real, to find God as the Ultimate Reality; having so found the terms of our life in Him, to find the terms of our life with our fellowmen. That is the reason that when the great Master of the art of living was asked, “Which is the great commandment in the law?” He declared, “Thou shalt love

the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." If He had never said another word, He would have made the race his debtor by that deliverance.

Religion a Natural Faculty

FROM those whose lives are perfectly comfortable and peaceful has not come the cry for the living God. Religion as an experience is not necessary for the comfort of people so placed. But it is *absolutely necessary for the development* of people so placed. We are not developed by our comfort, we are cheered by our delights. We are developed by the athletics of the soul, and for that development religion, as an experience, is as real as the function of any organ of the body is real in its relation to the field of its exercise. The soul seeks exercise and it has a field upon which that exercise must be expended. The development of the soul of a man is essential, if he would really be a man. Religion is a natural faculty, inherent in our being, and the effort must be made to adjust itself to those relations that are to the soul normal, natural, and necessary.

Religion's Contribution to Art

BY virtue of religion all art, in its appeal to the æsthetic nature, has its share in religion. It is

safe to say that without it, three things would never have been for our edification—the great works of sculpture and painting; the great works of architecture, where religion was enshrined; the great musical works, most of which we should not have had but for the contribution of religion to it; and the Latin and Greek classics. When Cassiodorus was secretary to the Eastern Emperor in the sixth century, he found on his hands a lot of monks whom he set to work copying the Latin and Greek classics, which were thus preserved to our age. This is the service done by religion as a servitor of man, creating and preserving art and literature in an age when the learned of art were to be found only in the churches of Europe.

The Means of Growth

THE whole problem is to use the means of growth until we reach the place where we can find God. "He is not far from every one of us," says the apostle. The story of the religious life is simply the story of discipline, of training, of usage, of habit, of instinct, of intelligence, or reason, until at last it dawns upon the human soul that where "he faltered, now he firmly treads;" and where he cried "like an infant in the night," the true Light shines for him and every means of growth has been his, from seeing the Eternal in the faces of his friends to that rapt communion of the soul with God where all intervening media are dropped out. It is like climbing by slow

processes, along difficult ways, to some great height from which one at last looks out.

The Walls of Christianity

ALL religions put together do not constitute religion. Religion is native to man. It is a function of the human soul. It has for its exercise the natural field of the life of the human being. Christianity is one of its aspects, which is for us an inevitable aspect. You can not by any process, born as you are, derived as you are, eliminate from yourselves the Christian influence. You may declare yourselves not Christian, you may be rebellious against it, but you must do it in terms of sin. You may imagine yourselves Buddhists or Mohammedans, or this or that thing which has become a new fancy to your speculative thinking. You have only put a Buddhist or Mohammedan tracery upon the walls of your thinking, but the walls are laid in the origins of Christianity, as they belong in the life of the Western world.

The Two Sacred Piers

WHEN Browning was asked by Canon Farrar to say what in his poems best expressed his faith, he answered, "He, at least, believed in soul, was very sure of God." So God and the soul are the two sacred piers in religion, from which all efforts in theology have attempted to spring the arch of a bridge. All the history of religion is an effort to lay down

a road-bed over the gulf supposed to exist between God and the soul. On this way the soul would travel over and find God; and if it be true that God is "seeking those to worship Him, who worship Him in spirit and in truth," then it is thought that God might come over by this way to the soul. Religion is an experience. The definition of religion is the property of the intellect; the essence of religion is shared by the soul with God.

Love, the Reconciler

WE are told that God and man must be made one, that there must be an "at-one-ment." Look at the story of the Prodigal Son. See the son coming "from a far country" ragged, lonely, sick, starved; and "when he was a great way off," his father saw him—why? because he was watching ever in that direction, with all the instinct, all the subtle wireless telegraphy of love. "And his father ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." The son was stopped in his confession, for love needs no confession or explanations. And the family was called to rejoice, "for this my son was dead and is alive again; was lost and is found." There was nobody needed to reconcile the father and the boy. There was no need for a mediator, so Jesus taught, when Love wanted to welcome Sorrow.

Converse with Reality

THE emphasis, if laid on doctrine misses altogether what life means. What is doctrine? It is a more or less accurate definition of how one man interprets religion to another man. "Why do you worship and whom? What do you believe and why? What are the motives of action and how did you come by them? What is the experience of life in its highest terms?" Immediately there must be definition. But when a man comes and says, "You have not the right definition;" it is like one who has found a new star by the telescope being accused by another, who has been working on the matter mathematically to see where the star ought to be, that he has not shown the formula by which the star was discovered. The mathematician says to him, "You can not give the definition; you can not give the formula." The other man turns to him and says, "*There is the star.*" Statement, definition, opinion, all change, and human life goes on calmly ripening its experiences, developing its powers, and assuring itself by converse with reality.

The Religion of Jesus

THE religion of Jesus is an Asiatic religion, but it is the only Asiatic religion that seems to fit even approximately the occidental mind. We have not adjusted it well. But the very ethical passion out of which it came; the very sense of God that was the essence of it; the ability to say, "God is a

spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" fits the largeness of our purpose, fits the adoption by us of modern thought, is a complete vindication of the theistic interpretation of the universe, for which all thinking minds in the Western world now stand. "God in all, above all," through all, is at once the utterance of science and religion. Out of a Jewish mind it came, inoculated by Greek thought, set at large by spiritual enthusiasm.

Emotion in Religion

WE do not decry emotion in religion. If it were not for emotion we would have few prayers and no hymns. All hymns are born of spiritual emotion and prayers are wafted upon the aspiration of the soul's outbreathing. Its inspiration comes to it and it breathes again unto high Heaven the thing which has been inspired in it. But when all has been said and done, in religion as in life, it is reality that counts; it is constancy that is dependable; it is the marriage of the soul to an abiding principle that remains. We reach God by the affections; it is not possible that any religion could be purely intellectual. The business of religion is to make life so well worth living, in the religious man's estimation, that he shall hunger in heart to make it more worth while to the other man. In the last and final statement, Religion has this for its guarantee, in the words of Martineau, that "for all time the difference must be

infinite between the partisan of beliefs and the man whose heart is set upon reality." In the man whose heart is set upon reality you have the registry of fewer emotions, but when all the effervescence has subsided, when all the quick breath of adulation and praise and adoration has gone by, he shall be found abiding, as one who has found "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land,"—his "heart is set upon reality."

Religion Must be Rational

RELIGION in its last analysis must be rational; that is, it must be made up of these constituents: there must be an awakened soul to which it comes; there must be an alert spiritual nature which participates in it and that spiritual nature must involve the whole man. It is not given us simply to feel deeply, but *to think* clearly on the thought side of religion. Many elements are involved in religion; intellectual apprehension, motive of conduct, adjustment of the affections, which is the unfailing source of devotion both toward God and man.

He is a rational being who "looks before and after"; who has reasons for his action, motives for his behavior, whose affections are the root of his principles and whose principles are the regulation of his affections, the one the sanctification of the other. Religion has to do with the whole man; and *religion must be rational or else it is superstition*. We are set against all superstition. But we examine the

myth and the miracle as we examine the fact; for the myth is as legitimate,—a flower growing upon a fruitful stem—and the miracle—a fruit growing in a credulous age,—as any fact that history reveals. The myth and the miracle are part of the poetry of religion. *There is a poetic interpretation of religion which is as legitimate as its facts.*

The fact is, there is only one kind of righteousness that a man can know,—the kind that to him is ideal; he sees it in another and he strives for it himself. That is the whole problem of life. There is no system of vicarious atonement; no attributing to me of the virtues of another; no saving of my soul by any process that is outside myself that can possibly be effective. You will come up by soul-force into the life, whatever it is, that belongs to the Great Father—the life that is in reserve for us; you will come up into it as the seed comes up into the summer, because it has the power of fertility and life in itself.

The Object of Religion

WHAT is the object of religion? It is the formation of character. If it does that, it is good so far as that is done. If it does anything else, not doing that, it is evil. I do not care how character is made, of what stuff it is made, how long it takes, what sorrows it involves, what joys it insures, what high-hearted hope it engenders, what black despair the soul passes through in the process, if in the end

character be formed, of which the tests are three: First, how does a man feel when he is living with himself? Second, how does anybody feel who is living with him? Third, what place does he take in the social order and how bear his share of the social responsibility? The religion which does that well is the religion for that man, whatever it may be for the next; for all forms of faith are

“... but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.”

Take your choice between a religion that is meant to restrain human nature and a religion that is meant to develop human nature. One will constitute a strait-jacket which is never used for well people, and the other will constitute an inspiration of which one would think the world eager to avail itself. You cannot regenerate anything by external pressure; you must find new life by new inspiration. Religion is not something to be achieved from without; it must be grown from within.

Natural Religion

JESUS was not intent upon self-conviction. He never seemed to labor with Himself concerning divine realities. He had a sublime self-confidence which was grounded in God. He was as sure of God as He was of Himself. Being conscious of his own unstinted life, He found it easy to believe there was no gulf anywhere in life from highest to lowest; and being thus sure of his own humanhood and its

guarantees in the infinite Fatherhood, He devoted his life to a vindication of the humanity of God. The kingdom of God is thus introduced by the Son of Man. What is highest, as spiritual, is nature's highest also. Religion, in the teaching of Jesus, is a natural experience. In a sense, better than the term usually conveys, it is "natural religion."

God Will Not Lose His Own

THERE can be no night in the human spirit chargeable on God except by a philosophy of life as false as the Ptolemaic system in astronomy, which set the sun revolving about the speck on which we live. If the heavens are always radiant, how is it that the earth is dark? If God is love, how is it that we so often miss his message and feel induced to doubt if He be, not love, but at all? Jesus charges home the defect on man. He probes to the very bottom of the matter and says: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" We create our own dimness of vision; we cast our own shadows on the path. Some poisonous atmosphere in the inner world may make the light burn dim; some disuse may have impaired the organ through which you look out upon the universe. God will lose none of his own, but what his own may lose of God is matter for grave thought.

The Prospective from Above

IF you were to start through the Adirondack wilderness, threading the forest by indistinct trails, crossing the rivers and lakes and ponds, following your guide, who never hesitates or loses the way, the confidence you would exercise would be entirely destitute of any mental picture of the country traversed. But the whole mental attitude would change, and be lifted to great distinctness and vividness of realization, if you should ascend Mount St. Regis, and see the whole region spread out before you like a picture. As you marked the familiar lakes and waving woods you had traversed, there would come into your mind the thought of the similarity of these two experiences to human life in the appeal of its intricacies to faith. God sees our life from above. We see it too close and too little of it at a time.

The Relation Between Religion and Life

THE one distinguishing characteristic of humanity is the power to vitalize with a divine breath of life the actions and thoughts which man shares with creatures less endowed. The spirit of the time is adverse to meditation; a false standard of life being fixed upon, the secular temper dominates the mind. It is difficult to make men understand the relation between religion and life. A man's religion is his business in life. It is an exhortation ringing false in tone to tell men to carry their religion into their business. It ought never to have been carried

out, unless it was dead. It indicates that fatal divorce which puts religion on one side and common life on the other; and life will always remain common, until it is spiritualized by a religious inspiration.

We talk about the service of religion. All service should be religious. The most religious of men said, "I am among you as One who serveth." We surround the table of the Lord, and call the bread and wine a sacrament. Is the table about which friends gather in the home any less sacred, and should not a man's daily duties stir him to sacramental devotion? Life is serious. This is the only way I know to lighten its load, to shift it from the shoulders of care to the altars of daily prayer, and accept it again as a commission from the hand of Eternal Love. Thus shall we be "renewed in the spirit of our minds," no longer doing eye-service, as men-pleasers, but doing the will of God from the heart.

The primitive man builds his altar and lays his sacrifice and wearies the heavens with his prayers because the Unseen has laid its power upon him and he is in the grasp of the Invisible. When he "endures, as seeing him who is invisible," the progress of religion has reached a stage far in advance. Religion thus begins in fear and runs the whole gamut of human experience until it ends in the souls of the holy ones who have escaped from themselves, and their fears, to God and his love.

But most of all, the natural use of religion is to regenerate life; to bring us up from the lower level

and make us human; to make that which is unmoral in the brute and is immoral in the man, forbidden to him because his business is to bring the full-grown man into being; to build up the "full-grown man, according to the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ."

Religion is meant to make duty a delight; and worship a natural gravitation, a celestial attraction; and the love of God, the sublimest aspect of all the pure motives of life. The gentle amenities which make our homes a sanctuary are but transferred to God's universe when we are at home with Him.

Again, the natural use of religion appears in that it provides a philosophy of life that shall lead a man to say: "I do not know what shall happen to me in all the years to come; but I think, before God, I know *how* I shall behave when it happens." That is worth while.

The Test of Religion

THE test of real religion is in its very beginning: "Does it make him who experiences its power love the highest in any sense?"

And the next step is joy. Joy is the tide, and peace is the sea. And the tide ebbs and flows, but the sea is always there. Joy is the blossom, peace is the root. The blossom falls because it is the time of fruit, but the root still bravely holds the stem and tells the secret of soil and air and rain and God unto the peaceful powers of the plant. So said

Jesus: "I have told you these things that my joy might be in you, and that your joy might be full." But He said later: "Peace I leave with you . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Much confusion about what religion is lies in the failure to distinguish between joy and peace. I shall be joyful if it is my nature to sing. All peace lies in the fibre of our souls, and is the rescue of us when joy is impossible. We descend from the heights where we have had wide vision and in the quiet places recover ourselves, and the spring song passes into the hush of summer. The song of the bird to its mate is over, because they are so busy now that the nest is full. The rippling music of the woods is over, but the maternity of the woods has begun. So our joy subsides to its quietness and the tide turns back and is lost in the sea.

Difficulties of Definition

WE turn to the great exponents of the root thoughts of the human mind, and we come upon such a definition as this of Goethe: "All religions have one aim—to make man accept the inevitable." But there is no delight in that; and if there is any purpose in religion, it must be to add zest to life by putting life into right relations, so that that which belongs to it shall come to it; so that not only shall life accept the inevitable but prepare splendidly for the next stage in life's development. Fred-eric Harrison's statement is that "Religion is summed

up in duty." But here we must separate religion from ethics and disregard the life of our fellow men. We come to feel that a definition of religion is necessary. To teach religion, however, be it remembered, is not to teach its definitions. Religion is "*doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service.*"

The Experience of Divine Reality

THERE is only one kind of way to love purely and strongly in the world. There is any quantity of diversities in the theory of what love is like, how provoked, what course it may take. All this has to do with the definition; and the world goes on loving in its old, plain, splendid, regenerative way, as the generations go by. Religion is an experience of divine realities. It is not to be had by authority, because no human experience can be transplanted from one human soul to another. It grows in every case from the seed, and the seed is harrowed in by the necessities of the spiritual nature, and free inquiry and personal obligation are necessary to the mellowing of the soul that it may be sowed with the seed of a real experience.

A woman who has been in one of the great churches came to me and said: "When I came face to face with the death of the person whom I loved best in all the world, I wanted to know for myself what were the issues of life and death." For calm weather, when indifference is quite a sufficient equipment for the soul, authority is quite comfortable, just

as securities are well placed in some bank of safe deposit. But when you want to use the thing you own as quick assets in a crisis, you must know whether it is negotiable in the market,—that is the whole question: whether I can take another man's opinion for a thing that is tearing the soul out of me; whether a chart that was made in the seventeenth century is good sailing directions for a voyage in the twentieth; whether I can take another man's discovery for my consolation when I am lost. Authority is not a substitute for personal religion.

I am a part of the bundle of life; I am a thread in the infinite weaving where the pattern appears in the warp and woof of life. That is true enough, but I want to know it. I want to get into communication with the vast reservoir which supplies that by virtue of which I can enrich my life, reinforce it when it is weak, build it up when it is breaking down. I want in terms of spirit to be able to do that which is done in terms of matter, so that when I am hit hard and go down, I shall fall upon that by virtue of which I gather strength, in the mere contact, to rise again. I want to know in terms of spirit the splendid message of Browning: "We fall to rise; are baffled to fight better, sleep to wake." To find this out is the great occupation of the human soul, or else, whatever else it has done — fortune gained, knowledge gained, influence exerted — lacking that, it has made a failure of the thing it was sent into the world to be.

GIVE us the peaceful courage to wait in patience to know Thee.

The world is hard, but splendidly hard. The angles are sharp, but if we pad angles we lose our effectiveness. It all keeps us at our best.

Easy roads lead to weakness; easy faith leads to complacency; easy prayer becomes mechanical.

Prayer is not to bring God down, but to lift man up; not to supplicate for what we want, but to find out what God wants.

When we pray, we do not alter God's mind, but we get together the things which belong together, the soul and God, and change ourselves.

We lay our burdens down in prayer to see their insignificance from a heavenly standpoint.

By the grace with which you render service can you recommend your religion.

You can not take from a church what your soul is not ready for.

The worshipping sanctities are in the mind.

Theology is the guess of man concerning God.

Jesus of Nazareth

What is Christian? To be like Christ; to be moved by His spirit; to abandon one's self to the will of God. It is a state not reached by the speculative faculty, but by devout affection.

PRAYER FOR FAITHFULNESS

OH all-encompassing Sun, whose infinite ray, however far it reaches, begins where the soul perceives Thee, we are not concerned that Thou art infinitely great. We know that Thou must be great, since Thou art the sum of being, but we are touched to think how infinitely near Thou art; and this Thou must be for Thou art the essence of being. We celebrate Thy compassion more than Thy glory, and are content to think Thou fillest all things if Thou dost but fill our need of the moment, and the bitterest cry Thou dost answer.

Hear the covenant we have made this hour with Thee, that we may not strain against the barriers of Thy love nor be restless within the everlasting arms, nor draw ourselves away from the breast of God. Hear the vow we have sung to Thee. It has moved in the cadences of song, but was born in the agony of the human spirit. We pray Thee to forgive us wherein we have grieved Thee. We have wandered whilst Thy spirit has kept step with us, and we have never been far from the invitation to go home to Thee. We pray Thee to make us conscious of this, for it would be dreadful to us if we were only conscious of ourselves and not of Thee. We can scarce live the moments and the hours as they pass, but we pray Thee that we may be able to lift ourselves by Thy spirit which shall come into our low places like a tide, and flood all

the ugliness of our shore with the pure waters of Thy love.

Hear us for any that find it hard to be brave and do not know how to do the little that they can in a large and fine way, as done to Thee. O God, help them to understand how much it means to be workers together with Thee, though they be but day-laborers hired for the hour, sent into the vineyard at the last moment. Help them to understand that the fruit they gather was of Thy planting.

And we ask Thee for Thy grace for the sick. There is so much we want to do that we are impatient when we can not do it; help us to believe that we work while we wait, and labor while we suffer; and grant that the travail of our pain may be the birth of Thy goodness. We pray Thee for those who miss their beloved out of their lives. Let them know that there is no division between life and life, and comfort according to their need all those that sorrow. Hear us in Thy merciful goodness.

Amen.

The Secret of Jesus

LIFE depends upon principles of action, upon motive power. What was the secret of Jesus of Nazareth? What was it that He struck out between man and God that made Him the man he was? His beatitudes were not *heard* from somebody. They are to be read in the light of his experience. He found them out. They were laws of life to Him. When He said: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God," it is his vision that He is telling us, a vision ever present to the clear eye and the pure heart. He knew, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy," from the warm springs of compassion springing up in His own nature. Over His carpenter's bench, on the road to Galilee, in the company of His disciples, and in the seclusion of His own prayerful times, He discovered laws of life. He who would imitate Christ does not match his life by Christ, but matches his principles of action by those of the Christ.

Christ's simplicity was a final statement of the law of life that needed no commentary, so that when we read the Beatitudes, we feel that we are reading a transcript of his common life. Through the whole ministry of His life, His simplicity is its marvel. His life and his teaching are crystalline in clearness, utterly simple in expression, entirely easy of apprehension. The doing of it is another thing.

We sometimes wonder that Jesus was so calm, clear of vision, direct in his thinking, sure of moral issues.

If we would find the secret of this calm, deep soul, we must find the path which led to the wilderness of the temptation, where He girded up his strength anew. We must seek the path into the mountain stillness, where He knew He could find it in the night, and where on that height of spiritual vision He remained all through the hours of darkness. Part of his secret of abiding trust He has discovered to us; part we must discover for ourselves. All that intruded itself between Him and his work, encumbering his love until it was not free to spend itself unhindered—all this, He cast on God. Going to school like a little child in God's kingdom, He learned lessons of the lily, the sparrow and the beast of the field; and argued that, if "the Son of Man had not where to lay his head," He still stood forth the freest spirit of all that burdened time.

The secret of Jesus, so often misunderstood (in terms of sacrifice, of self-abnegation, of surrender, and of incarnation), really was the discovery that a human soul might be so related to the Infinite Life of all, that it might be so absorbed into the will of God, that the human will might be so brought into coalescence with the will that is Divine, *that we might be lifted out of death into eternal life*. He brought eternal life to light by stating the terms from God on which it might be acquired. This is good news because it is of prime importance, it has to do with reality, it shows an established relationship between that which is constant in me and that which is permanent in God, and the relationship is permanent.

The Joy of the Christ

LET us turn to the crystalline joy of the Christ. The testimony of the New Testament is to the joyousness of Christ. And why not? Shall He be at one with God and find no joy? As well say a great orchestra may be at concert pitch and have no harmony. As well say that every responding string was not liquid music as the bow or hand touched it, as to say that One who declared, "I and My Father are one," was not drinking the full, deep draught of his perpetual peace and brimming delight from the fountain from which flows all the joy of the world.

Jesus, the Lens of God

THE New Testament everywhere speaks of Jesus as a means to an end, not as an end in Himself. Hear Him: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Now the Way is a way some-whither; and the Truth is the expression of some elemental fact; and the Life is derived from the same source of being. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Jesus is God's lens to shine through; our lens to look through. Jesus is the lens through which God looks—this is the mediation between our ignorance and the perfect beauty of godliness whose name is God.

The soul is dependent for inspiration, not for rescue. We look to God for revelation; we want to have Him made plain. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the

bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*." You can imagine all men near-sighted, never having seen a star, and then the world coming in procession to the telescope and revealing the new heavens—the sideral heavens made plain to a near-sighted world. This is just what happened in Jesus Christ. Men had not any view of God that would satisfy until they learned it, apprehended it, had it made plain in terms of a human life. That was the lens through which God showed Himself to the eye that searched for Him.

The Divinity of Jesus

WE believe that Jesus is divine because we believe that He was a man at one with God. It was He who said, "I and my Father are one," and "I am not alone for the Father is with me." This is the normal state of the spirit which is at one with God. We believe that He is a Savior of men, not by appeasing God but by revealing God to men. We believe that there were wonders which attended upon his life, but that they were the inevitable element in the history of a great Soul. We believe that we do Him more honor, not when we believe all that the Gospels say He said, but when we believe those words attributed to Him which are like Him, and disbelieve those which are inconsistent with the sublimity, purity, and majesty of his superb personality.

The Compassionate Christ

“SHE hath done what she could.” This kindly comment upon a beautiful but simple act was spoken by the Master to his disciples not long before his death. Jesus was no mystic, rapt away from common life; yet He was the prince of Mystics in this,—that, when most alive unto God, He was filled with a compassion that was divine in its tenderness and strength. Transfigured on the Mount, He comes down out of that radiant experience to heal the demoniac boy at the foot of the Mount. On his way to Jerusalem, with the sound of angry voices, already present to his imagination, crying “Crucify Him!” He is stopped by the cry of a blind beggar by the wayside; providing also for the care of his mother and the beloved disciple; turning from them to emphasize the prayer of a dying thief and comforting him with a voice tremulous with love and pain. Thus do the memories of those who wrote about Him preserve the sweet assurance that He turned *not away* from his great trial but turned *in it* to assert the divine communion that love has with sorrow.

The Daily Companionship

FOR each of us is the daily companionship of Jesus a dear and beloved friendship. You and I must climb to where He stands. I see Him yonder upon the high peaks of human experience; I see Him stand. I know there is a path thither, else He had not been there. He was not let down from heaven

upon those peaks of human life. He found them through the night of struggle and the daylight of divine approval and won the heights, to which there must be some path. And so we begin our climb toward the summit of His Transfiguration, cheered by that heavenly vision, and trying for a time to forget the wailing of the "demoniac boy" below.

The Denial of Jesus

THE skepticism that we dread is not that which turns upon some theologic proposition concerning the nature of Jesus; it is that skepticism of the merchant, the banker, the broker, the lawyer, the man of letters and the minister who says, "I cannot live my life on the terms of Jesus Christ." Very well, then, let that be his denial, but *never let him call himself Christian again*. If Christ is of use after all these years, He is of use in mercantile and in professional life and in the sanctuary of our homes. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him."

Following the Master

OUR business is to find at what springs Jesus drank; what life flooded in Him; what high courage was his own; what secret of simplicity He held; what splendid courage moved Him; and then say: Since Thy life was all too short, was broken off

in the midst and snapped by the pressure of cruel hands, Beloved, we will turn from Thy cross, expectant, and go our ways to make up that which remains of the life of Jesus Christ in this our day. With free movement and light step, will we follow "the grace and truth of Jesus Christ," the Brother of those who would live in the spirit.

The life of the Christ was free from all self-pity. It had no morbid self-consciousness; it had God-consciousness which engulfed all else. It had no morbid introspection, no curious inquiry into its own states, no uncertainty as to the permanence of its processes and the sublime end to which they were bound. In that joy which made children flock to Him to be blessed, and women follow upon His path that they might minister to Him, the victorious tone of his life was the compulsion of all those who came within the influence of his ministry.

The Leadership of Jesus

WE believe in God absolute. I invite you to faith in the revelation He makes of Himself. We must find some form in which the abstract may become concrete. The absolute must make a revelation. Jesus declares Himself such a revelation—the revelation "God has made in his Son." Not in the obscure way phrased in dogma, nor in the spectacular way expected by the Jew, but a manifestation of spiritual verities in the terms of human life, an exhibition of eternal attributes as human qualities, a demonstra-

tion of the Infinite in terms of the finite and concrete, "God was in Christ," his anointed, "reconciling the world unto Himself."

The supreme flower of the Jewish genius for religion was Jesus of Nazareth. He was a Jew in body, in mind, and in motive; a Jew after those sturdy defenders of spirituality in religion, Amos, Micah, Joel, Isaiah; a Jew appearing in a time of decay of spiritual worship to declare that God is a Spirit; a Jew renewing the ancient hope of God's kingdom and its Messiah, but declaring: "It cometh not with outward show but is within you"; suspected of making innovations upon the ancient faith, but answering him who asks for the "greatest of all commandments" in the words He had repeated each day in the worship of the synagogue in his native village: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is One Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone of religion. As Christians we apprehend it, by reason of the personal relation between the believer and the Master. Dismiss from your minds all *theories* about Christ; remember that the relationships of life are spiritual in essence. They are relations of the soul, and they cannot be the subject of speculative interest and exploitation. Every effort to define the nature of Christ is a deviation from the purpose of his ministry to you. Every effort to speculate as to his being is to divert attention from what He is to you. The relationship is personal. It is the relation of a leader

and him who is led. It is the relation of one who climbs steadily up heights of divine experience to the guide who has travelled that way before, and with whom he stands side by side on the heights.

The Master of the Art of Living

I FIND myself impatient and inattentive when discussion in any group of men turns upon any doctrinal statement about Christ. I feel as I would if some dear friend had been mentioned in a group of those who knew him, and they began to speak about his place in society, his possessions, the respectability of his family, the amount of his trade. It is my friend I know, not the accidents of his birth and breeding. It is the heart that has been revealed to me. It is the inner life that ever appeals to me—the inner life in terms of spiritual activity. Let us talk of our friends in terms of spiritual excellence; and the only way never to lose them is to hold them in that relation to ourselves. So it is with this great Friend of the race, this Master-spirit of all time, this Master of the art of living. He is *personal* to the believer who really believes in Him.

The Child of the People

GAUTAMA BUDDHA was a king's son; Jesus of Nazareth the son of a carpenter. Buddha went out from a palace to proclaim the great renunciation. Jesus, with the dust of his carpenter work upon his simple garments, climbed the height behind Nazareth

to be alone with God. He was the child of the poor, the child of the working man, the child of a people unknown in Israel, belonging to a race we have not learned to appreciate but have only learned to despise. For fifteen hundred years the people out of whose loins He came were harried through Europe for the reason (it was said) that they put Him to death; and yet the very church that hounded them was getting the benefits of his dying by their theory of atonement. This child, then, of the poor, began at humanity's lowest round to help us climb, and that He climbed to the height of his Beatitudes is best realized when we read them in the light of human experience.

The Humanity of Jesus

IN the relationship between the human soul and its ideals as realized in Jesus of Nazareth, we must never lose the idea of his simple humanity. The moment He has an experience I may not have, I have so far lost Him. The moment He holds relations to God which I *may* not entertain,—(I do not say, which I *do* not entertain),—He has escaped my grasp to higher levels whither I may not follow. Our poor, laggard love follows lame upon the path over which His has passed. Our compassions are thin and diaphanous when stretched above the misery of the world which His enwrapped. Our tenderness is like brutality beside the tenderness of One who could tell a woman of her sin and leave her repentant, but not

in despair. It would, therefore, be the idlest of all speculations to wonder whether human life should ever be greater than it was in Him.

What do we mean by the humanity of Jesus? When He said "Blessed are the poor in spirit," He stated what humanity might feel of utter humility. When He declared that "Blessed are the meek," He was speaking of the blessedness that had come to Him in terms of His own profound reverence before God. When He said "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God," He was beholding in the untroubled waters of his own breast the reflection of the stars that were divinely near as He gazed within. The Beatitudes of Jesus are to be read in the light of his experience. They are human experiences and every one of them challenges us; every one of them appeals to us with a grip and hold that lifts us to its own height, at least in prospective prophecy of what we may become. Every one sounds its splendid clarion to our low days.

Not a Formula but an Inspiration

TO account for Jesus is not to live with Him. The Gospels are a help to knowing Him. They are little windows into His life through which we look, but we look at it as one looks at the outside of a cathedral. He stands outside and looks in, and the figures upon the great windows are blurred. Let him enter the house of God and look out. Let him stand at the high altar and gaze on all sides on the inter-

preting world as it makes clear in terms of light the thing which from without was confused and unequal. That is the difference between thinking *about* Christ and living interior to his experiences in terms of our own. We are not given a formula for life, but an inspiration; and its re-utterance, its reincarnation, its realization is in terms of each life as it is shone through by the illumination of a soul.

The "Mystical Theory" of Jesus

THERE are a few unthinking people—people who do not read, nor study, nor think things down to the ground—who believe that Jesus never existed. They might be said not to believe in Christ; and the remedy for them would be to put into their hands the argument of an English Ecclesiastic, who applied the same theory and system of reasoning to Napoleon Bonaparte and proved that he never existed. That is the easy answer to those people whose theory is based in sophistry and lapse of logic, the assumption of premises that are not premises. It only needed fresh insight into history, and new study of the gospels to dismiss the "mythical" theory of Jesus. That man would emphatically be chargeable with not believing in Christ who admits that Christ existed and was just the character described in the Gospels and yet deliberately says: "That is not the sort of leader I will have." So we must examine the facts. We must get at the basis. We must go back to "the law and the testimony" and examining the Gospels, and

the Epistles of Paul, and the other related documents of the New Testament and the writings of the earliest Fathers of the Church, we must try to set Jesus of Nazareth against his own background; to make Him not a Greek philosopher, when He was a Jew and a peasant and a carpenter; to make Him not a nineteenth century man when He belonged to the first century; to make Him *what He was* by getting at what we call "local color" and the atmosphere of his human life. That is the first condition and the man who attempts anything else, or neglects this and then delivers himself authoritatively with regard to the life of Jesus, has no standing with students.

The Apostolic Age

THE Apostolic Age set itself two problems and no more; it was intent upon purifying society; and it was intent, as a means to this end, on proclaiming the Supreme God as the object of worship, revealed in his servant, Jesus, so clearly as to make Him seem the Son of God, the "only begotten." Vice and polytheism found their antagonists in a faith which proclaimed, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord the Eternal, the Eternal is One," and then summoned to that purity of heart which was to be the preparation to see God. This was the essential message of Jesus; the adjustment of human relationships upon the terms of a Love which in God is Fatherhood and in man is brotherhood. It was not an age of dogma. They were to do God's will, these disciples of the apostolic

age, as a means of knowing any teaching to be authoritative.

How We Think of Him

YOU cannot think of Jesus of Nazareth, except as beautiful and strong and courageous. Our habitual thought of Him is of a splendid personality, a beautiful nature, of a Man whom children cuddled to and his hand was placed upon their heads in blessing; of a man whom women followed from Galilee to Judea, ministering to Him out of their wealth to eke out the wants of his poverty. We want to think of Him always as having no fear, as of sublime courage. We think of Him as reading the beatitudes from the page of his own heart. How did He know that "blessed are the pure in heart?" Why, simply because He had seen God.

The Theological Christ and the Historical Jesus

NO man can realize what Jesus really was unless he discriminate between the historical Jesus and the theological Christ. We are in collision with the people who worship the theological Christ, but who will admit that if they had been present when Jesus was on earth and had attempted to say their prayers to Him,—with his Jewish parentage and Jewish training and his abandon to the unity of God as expressed in the great Shema which He uttered every day of his life,—they would have been lifted from their knees, while a look of horror would

have passed over his face to think they should have worshipped Him. He would have said to them "Why callest thou me good? There is none good, save One, that is God."

The High Water Mark of Human Life

JESUS CHRIST is the beat of the Eternal thought upon the shores of human life. If the sea comes in until it covers the highest rocks on the shore, then we know that all the pebbles on the beach are covered, also, and bathed by the tide. "Christ Jesus" becomes God's way of saying how high the tide of life can run! Today, humanity reads here the high-water mark which in all the ages the tide of human power and life has been recording; and "created in Christ Jesus" is thus far the topmost line along the whole face of that shore that looks out to the great sea of God's inexhaustible life. "The measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" is the commission given to man to fulfill in the development of his being.

I think that after Jesus had spoken and after He had lived, and after the records of that sublime experience in the terms of our common life had come into the world, a new water-mark was made upon the shores of time, and the tide has forever since been striving to reach that mark. Our spirits lift with aspiration, longing to rise upon the shore to that height again. By the coming of Christ into the lives of men, the meaning of life is permanently lifted. More than that: it enhances the power of life: it

corrects the emphasis of life: it shows the ground of unity of life. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." "He hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness." "He hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor" because the human spirit cannot be impoverished by its condition. It can be enriched even in the midst of its beggary, and go its way as becomes the children of a king.

The Message to the Humble

THE record of the thoughts of Jesus gives us indubitable proof that his one purpose was to convince the spiritual nature of man that it had inalienable rights in the fatherhood of God. Therefore, He has no theory of the fall of man, and tells the sublimest truths of his religion—the fatherhood of God, the universality of religion, and the spirituality of worship—to the humblest and least respectable of the common people who surround Him; and He gives as his justification that these things are not for the "wise and the prudent,"—the sophisticated and the canny,—but for babes, simple people, who are nearest to the naturalness of life.

In the new motives for religion, we recognize the fact that "perfect love casteth out fear; he that feareth is not made perfect." Love is the supreme grace of life,—the love of the other.

The Spirit of the Message

IS the gospel of Christ really good news? In the first place, no man has anything to tell who is not possessed by his message. The message of the meanest messenger, if he trembles with its excitement, if he hurries to its delivery, if he is charged with its importance, if he is imbued with its significance,—the message of the meanest messenger, it becomes kings to hear. So the first condition of good news is that the messenger be “anointed.” There has descended upon him that conscious contact of the Eternal that has kindled all his powers and lifted them to the full significance of their function. As a matter of fact his gospel may be good news; but it is also good to see him deliver it, because he believes it profoundly. That Christ’s gospel was good news was shown by his own conviction and by its effect; for it changed the face of civilization.

“I Am the Way”

IF you will run over the pages of an Evangelical hymn-book, the hymn-book used in the churches that are really consistent, you will find that a large proportion of the hymns are addressed to Christ as prayers, or adoration, or tributes of praise. But there is not one of them that any early disciple could have sung. There is not one of them that the Master would have approved. They are an affront to the truth for which He stood, namely, the adoration of the only God, whose revealer He was, whose inter-

preter He was, whose expression in terms of human life we thoroughly believe Him to be. We try to get His view of God, which is a great deal better than getting a view of Him and stopping there. Many people come to Christ, picture his beauty to their imagination, idealize Him, worship, and forget that He said: "I am the Way."

Jesus said: "I am the Way," but a way leads some-whither, it leads somewhere. "I am the Truth"; the truth is the expression of an ultimate reality. "I am the Life" proceeding from the final life of all. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." His whole teaching is that He is a means to an end, that end, the Father. Our effort is to climb and see what He sees. No mountain climber ever yet climbed to any accessible height where the guide had not gone before or knew the way. And when he reached the beetling cliffs and stood perhaps on the top of the Matterhorn, he drew in his delight in panting, short breaths; but he did not stand looking at his guide. He gloried in the guide's strength, he rejoiced in the guide's skill, he had followed in the guide's footsteps, *but he tried to see what the guide saw.* That is belief in Christ; to get his view of God, and of life, and of human destiny.

The "Fall of Man"

THE churches that have accepted the total depravity of man, cannot think of Jesus as really human. His character is too beautiful to allow that. They ac-

cept the total depravity of human nature and the story of the Fall of Man, to which Jesus never refers in any record that is left to us and having accepted it, they need the intervention of a Savior to work out an atonement, not between them and sin, but between them and God. This total depravity theory nowhere appears in any gospel in the words of Jesus,—indeed every word of his seems to be a denial of the fall of man from original purity. It is an absolutely blasphemous attitude that our Father should be thought One who needs an atonement to reconcile Himself to his children whom He has made.

Relationship to the Apostles

THERE is not any reference to Jesus except as human in any epistle of Paul, who seems not even to have known—at least not to have remembered to state—any story of his unusual birth. In the Gospels, there is no reference, except in the isolated passages in the first part of Matthew and the first part of Luke to Jesus as other than human. Mark's Gospel, which is the oldest, begins with the baptism by John the Baptist, and ends with the burial of Christ. Cutting our way through the tangled thicket of opinion, with the sharp cleavage of logic or the disengaging power of affection and sincere devotion, we discover that one statement after another, as to how He was God, disappears, until we stand face to face with the disciples who dared rebuke Him when they thought He was wrong and dared lie upon his

bosom when they thought that He was in trouble; who tried to comfort Him as one human soul would comfort another.

God Speaks All Dialects

GOD spoke the same word to Buddha that He spoke to Jesus; namely, the claim of a child of His to understand the secrets of the Most High; but in Buddha, it appeared as the doctrine of negation and the loss of personality; and in Jesus it appeared as the constructive doctrine of the Supreme Personality in communication with the infinite in man. So that though God spoke the same word to his child in India, nearly six hundred years before the time of Jesus, that He spoke to his Child of Nazareth, it took the form of Buddhism as the philosophy of negation in the one, and of optimism as the philosophy of well-being in the other; just as surely as in the one, it was the language of India, and in the other, it was the language of Palestine. God speaks all dialects and his speech, when it phrases itself, is uttered in the terms of its recipient. The channel by which truth is conveyed will give form to the truth and color its speech.

What Would Jesus Have Us Do?

WE try to think what Jesus of Nazareth would like us to do. We do not simply ask what would He like us to be. I think what He would like us to be is to be our best selves, enlightened by his ex-

ample, inspired by his spirit. He would like us to be our best selves, but what would He like us to do? Dorothy Dix answered that question by liberating the insane from their chains and turning the mad-house from a place of torture into a place of healing. When Abraham Lincoln, Charles Sumner, William Lloyd Garrison, together with the good Quaker, Whittier, who himself was a believer in the humanity of Jesus, asked what Christ would have them to do about the slave, they contended for his freedom even to intemperance of utterance and action.

Repeating the Life of Christ

TO believe in Christ is to repeat his life, not in words, but to repeat his life in terms of life. There is many a thing that He said that you have to take with a difference. As Lecky shows in "The Map of Life," you cannot put up over any savings-bank the injunction "Take no thought for the morrow." You cannot bring into any court of justice the statement, "If a man take thy coat, give him thy cloak also." These are the natural utterances of his time and have to be adjusted to the really higher ethics of this time. Believing in Christ is repeating his life in terms of our life.

"Ah, none shall see Thee as Thou art,
Or know Thee for himself at all,
Until he has Thee in his heart,
And heeds thy whisper or thy call."

JESUS discovered how he could rejoice in trouble.

The supreme achievement is to give thanks when up to the lips in suffering.

We need religion in terms of soul, an evangel of life, not doctrine.

It is only struggle of soul that saves; it is not the thing found, not even God, but the struggle put into the search.

The purpose of the Christian life is to draw a parallel with the life of Christ.

In Christ was character in terms of celestial affection.

Dying is easy when we believe in God.

We can find out what God is only through man. Explore the human mind, not Heaven.

Divine revelation is shown in the accustomed things of life.

It is beautiful to be part of the pattern that is in the mind of God.

The faith of men is correlative to the constancy of God.

The heroic is the only way to peace. The path of peace lies in marching to the music of the Universe.

Immortality

“ The passion for Immortality is the best proof of its existence.”

PRAYER FOR PURIFIED DESIRES AND
BLESSING

O GOD, to whom we come because the preparation of the heart and the answer of the tongue are both from Thee, prepare our hearts for Thy sowing, that the harvest of Thy choosing may spring up. Answer the thing that we speak to Thee, if it be best for us; and so prepare our hearts that we shall know how to forego the thing Thou dost withhold. Grant unto us such courage and constancy that we shall be brave to think we also shall come before the Compassionate. So purify our hearts that we shall not desire the thing that does not go to the very center of a divine affection. Make our love to Thee so deep and real that when we love Thee we shall worship, and that loving Thee so we shall be able to love even the unlovely. Search our consciences that they may be acquitted, rebuke our vanities that they may be ashamed. Teach us how to transmute Thy bounty into blessing, and to make our dire experiences the strength of life. Let nothing seem too much for us to do if it is Thine appointment, nor anything seem too much to bear if it be bestowed by Thy hand. Give us such confidence in Thee that we shall turn away from the wonders of Thy world to behold the wonders of Thy grace.

Grant unto Thy children in this hour, wherever they may be, to be commissioned anew of Thee, to

stand in the stead of Thy Christ, to be ambassadors for Thee though it be in the garment of sackcloth. Give us to know the meaning of our journeys, and make our paths plain, for we are like little children that know not how to go out or come in to the House of Life. Great Companion, give us Thy company.

Grant to the sick through the fever and the pain, the ministry of Thy holy spirit, and to all that minister to them such wisdom and steadfastness that they shall seem to receive every healing thing from Thy hand, and to know how to move upon the paths of health for those that have dropped upon the road.

Grant Thy presence to those who are troubled, to those who are in distress that they have not invited and burdened with burdens they have not stooped to place upon themselves, and most of all to those who are shadowed by affliction, in whose home there are vacant places that they can not fill, and in their hearts great sorrows that seem to have overshadowed all their joy. Be with them all, Thou great solace and comforter of Thy children, and draw them to Thyself. Amen.

There is no Fear of Death

THERE is no fear of death. We shall go down, saying, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Why? Because there is no evil in God's good world. Death is not known to the vocabulary of Nature. Change, Nature knows, and continuance, but no death. And in the future, I think a welcome waits us as it waited us at birth. We shall go out in that great struggle of the birth that is to come; and men shall say, "He is dead." What they shall say who are waiting for us, I do not know; but it must be as much better than this life as its anticipation is higher than the mere fact of birth. Ever upward God's creations move. Ever upward God's progressions tend. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Consciousness of Life the Ground of Immortality

NO proofs of any kind are anything but secondary as compared with the life of God in the soul of man. "This is eternal life!" There is no substitute for it. It is the consciousness that was phrased in the New Testament that the "Spirit witnesseth with our spirits that we are the children of God. If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs of Christ." When I find ten thousand people who say that something has come into their experience which gives them the reason to believe that they have "passed from death to life," that "old things have passed away, and behold, all things have become new," that "now there

is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," that the whole process of life has for them been enlarged, so that it seems a new experience, I think it is the part of the scientific mind to believe that the testimony of consciousness is worth at least credibility, and may be the basis of common experience.

All the instincts of the race touching the meaning of life fly one way. It is the instinct of the deathlessness beyond death — the passion for immortality. One thing upon which this passion is based is the *consciousness of life*. This is my possession. You are not sane and normal if you cannot go out on a radiant morning like a child, and fill your lungs with God's good air, and turn your eyes to the glint of God's good light and thank Him that you are alive. The man who comes and says: "I can prove to you that you will not live forever" finds that the stress of obligation rests on him. How does he know? Did he ever die? Does he live in the part of him that is going to die? Not at all. If he lives at all well he lives in all that part of him that he believes in his inmost nature is not touched by death. The consciousness of life is the first firm ground on which the passion for immortality steps in its upward look.

I am conscious that I live. Let him prove who can that I shall die. Consciousness is the consciousness of life, full, pulsating, delicious. The burden of proof that it shall end rests on the man who is in love with death. For me, for you, it is life that we believe in; all else is its incident, and nothing more. God has ordained this world after a beautiful fashion.

The Dead Live to Us

IF death is the end of life, this is an irrational world, and the mere play of forces is no longer interesting. They have no end, no object: there is no last term: life's ascending series ends in death. I doubt, however, if anybody ever lived — any human being, in the highest sense—who could believe that his friends were dead, — really believe it. We may be harried by the fear of death. We may be panic-stricken by the stroke of it; we may not dare to take upon ourselves the responsibility of deciding the condition upon which it appears, but when we are alone, the dead live to us. It is only those who have loved unworthily or lived unworthily whom we can think of as dead, and even they transcend the condition because of the love that has baptized them with its own riches of affection. Baron Bunsen, looking into the face of his dying wife, said: "In thy face, beloved, have I seen the Eternal."

Eternal Life does not Begin when We Die

NO inquiry, however interesting, concerning immortality; no comfort, however consoling, derived from such inquiry, and no proofs, however plausible, based on such inquiries, can ever be a substitute for the life of God in the soul of man. The passion for immortality is a delusion, comes to nothing in the human creature who entertains it, unless there is in that human being a master passion for eternal life. And eternal life does not begin when you die. I do not

suppose it begins when you are born. I think that it is part of the life of God in process through the world. When once the human soul says: Let me move with His motion and keep step with His laws and be righteous with His righteousness and breathe by His inspiration, then eternal life swallows up all mortality, and the sense of identity between the life of God and the life of His child has reached the coalescence which forbids the thought of death.

We Assert Immortality

DO we deny immortality? No. We assert it in terms as firm as Socrates used when he turned to drink the hemlock, and said: "Have I been so long with thee, Crito, and thou dost talk of burying Socrates? Thou shalt bury me if thou canst catch me; but, when thou hast buried my body, do not say thou hast buried Socrates." But the Future Life seems so long to wait, so far to go. It grows more interesting when we have most of our people beyond our ken. It is interesting, because it is so full of the love we call our own. But it is not remote, for the love is here. It is not far to go, for our next of kin belong to our daily life. I cannot separate myself from any love that has been pure in its relationships; and all relationships of love at their best are spiritual and cannot be sheared away by any pain or anything that comes in our common days.

Love is Stronger than Death

“JESUS knowing that his hour was come when he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own, he loved them unto the end.” This text says, greatly to our comfort, that the pure relationships of life are eternal. As the sun sinking in our western sky is proof of a day dawning in other lands, so this rich nature going down to death with the light of love in His eyes undimmed, says to each of us: “Now abideth faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love.” Many floods, though they be of the river of death, cannot drown love. Love is stronger than death. We do well to interpret both the future life and the purpose of God by our immortal affections.

Our Enlarged Conception of Immortality

THE conception of immortality that answers to the passion for it must keep pace with the growing worth of man and the increasing measure of God. Many difficulties arise from trying to match an enlarged experience of religious life to an old pictorial heaven. We want a pictorial presentation of conditions about which we can know nothing. The difficulty lies in the fact that we have not yet risen to the apprehension that our idea of eternal life and consequent immortality, must keep pace with what we know of man and God. Man is not the same being he was a century ago. New areas have been staked out in his mind. The immanence of God has taken

the place of the absentee Deity, who had to be reached by envoys and represented by decrees. The sense for immortality must be enlarged in proportion to the new discoveries concerning man and God.

Life the Theme which Persists Forever

DOCTOR CALTHROP has said: "One can give only what he has to give; and God can give no death, because He has no death to give." The Creator cannot take out of the fathomless resources, the endless depths of His life, the thing we call death and give it to His children. In all nature there is nothing that ever died. Death can no more be found than can the beginnings of life. That is the marvellous thing, — that life is so profound to the thought of the student of the natural world, that no plummet can measure its depth; life is so constant, that whatever changes in the rhythm of it may appear, the theme persists forever. So far as the natural world is concerned, "the enemy" called death is dead. The persistent, insistent, continuing tide of life is ever at flood, and in the Man of Nazareth, it was life that marked a new water-line along the shores of time.

The Burden of Proof Rests on the Doubter.

IN the hundreds of millions of people in all lands this day, unless they are beyond all consciousness of their surroundings, — in that vast multitude whom

scarcely any man may number, there is but one consciousness, and its name is *life*. Yet some trivial mind, some debater of the schools, some man who would make an amendment to life's resolution, rises to say that there shall come a time when life shall be no more. Let him prove it! Let him prove it against the consciousness of all the world that is alive, and living is the ultimate of all it knows. The onus of the proof rests on him who denies it. Nature lends him no aid. Religion forbids him his thesis; and all love with clinging hands claims its own, with the declaration that what love cannot lose, life cannot part with.

Jesus Brought the Good News of Immortality

“**W**HO hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” The writer meant by this that Jesus had brought into the world the news that death had no claim on man; that the life of God could not be extinguished by anything that happened to him. A man had arrived who had found out from God that you might live forever, and He had found it out, not by having lived before, nor by having yet lived again; but He had found it out by having discovered relationships between Him and the Eternal, so that He could not think of his life as extinguished without God's dying. I can imagine that the universe might pass away, but forever and forever, he must be a part of it in terms of real relationship. Jesus of Nazareth held that it was possible, from that

time on, to think of life without conclusion or period set to its being.

That Survives which is Worthy to Survive

THE question of the immortal life is, in my judgment at least, simply a question of capacity. When you are asking for the perpetuity of being out of your vision, beyond your ken, of some one whom you love, what are you asking for? You are asking that the thing you *knew* may remain. Now what did you know? If you were living on the higher levels of life, you knew love and solicitude and sweet communion of kindred spirits and all that makes up the soul side of life. You are asking for that which made the sanctities of life. You are asking that these shall stay that would have survived for you if every possible calamity had fallen upon the person but death,—the *person*, not the individual, but the person upon whom your love was set. I say, therefore, the business of life is to have that soul-condition that is its own guarantee of immortality.

This is a Rational World

THE order of development in the world is this — that in the ascending series called animal, man is the last term; in the ascending series called man, mind is the last term; in the ascending series called mind, the moral sense is the last term. And the moral sense at perfect flower is the spiritual life in communion with God. Twenty millions of years, we are

told, have preceded the highest form of organic life on the globe. What myriads of generations have passed out of sight while men were preparing to produce souls who are the great "friends of those who would live in the spirit." But if it is only a preparation for causing them to disappear like a moth touched by a flame, then this is an irrational world. It is a world that has spent millions of years to produce nothing, nothing! The splendid heroisms of Jesus were then the mere ravings of a fanatic meaning nothing.

Nature Knows no Death

I BELIEVE that when the hour comes, we may lay us down to die with as perfect confidence that the sleep is but for a time as that with which last night we committed ourselves to the unknown ministry of sleep to wake renewed. Nature gives us no warrant to add to our vocabulary the word, "death." Nature does not know the word "death." Two words she knows,—“change” and “continuance,”—and is constant to a constant change. The two great laws of constant nature are *the conservation of energy* and *the correlation of forces*. That which is once present is always present; and whatever change may come upon its method, no change comes upon its identity. Let us put our lives into the great reservoir of the living and the constant, and trust God.

What Can Death Do?

WHAT can death do? When the autumn comes the leaves that sift down from the branches of the trees have been shoved off by the possible growth of the next season, and the blossoming May gives way to a less ideal aspect of the orchard, its aspect of fruit which has no further use for the petals of the blossom. What can death do? We have not lived in our bodies, so we may dismiss them. It is a fine philosophy that in the creature grown entirely human, death is not the introduction to the future, but the dismissal of hindering disabilities that are in the present. So runs my dream, and I find myself saying with Jean Paul: "When we die, we shall lose our sleep, but we shall not lose our dreams."

If Man Die, There is no God

ASK you to consider that the life of God being true, there is nothing that can happen to you, unless the life of God is hurt in the process. If your God is a name in a book, you can lose Him by having the book destroyed. If your God is a theory of being, some people wiser than you will pass a resolution about the theory of being and you will read it and find you have no God. If your God is a mere idol, and not an imperative ideal, then it may be that some iconoclast shall destroy your idol. But if, on the other hand, God be nearer than hands and feet; if the light of His vision is a light that never was on sea nor land; if the consciousness of His

communion is more real than any sacrament of love you have ever tasted; if in all the wandering of your days, He is the Great Companion, what can happen to you that will not involve His life? When the voyager is wrecked, the helmsman is to blame. When the discoverer is lost, the guide is reproached. When the poor are robbed, the keepers of their wealth are charged. And if man die, then there is no God, for the fact of his being carries in its bosom all these timid fears of ours and quiets them to confidence.

Men and women have learned that they need not be *afraid of God*; that God is no longer a great antagonist, but is the "Great Companion." That was the great deliverance of Jesus, when He called God by the home name, "Our Father," and said "One is your Father, even God, and all ye are brethren." Life is not a probation but an opportunity; not a discipline but a privilege; and so we learn *not to fear life*. To add zest to life, to raise the tide of being, to register a higher mark and intenser endeavor,—this is the business of religion. And so we learn *not to fear the future*. If God is the Great Companion, He shall not die when I live. If one's life is lived in God, can dying cast him out of that environment?

The Passion for Immortality is Legitimate

YOUR child develops a taste for music; you call it a "taste" because it is so slight as yet; it simply smacks of music. You deny yourself and make

every provision, and if necessary, waste time and money on the experiment that is to unfold the thing that you believe nature has enfolded in that child. You catch at the very construction of your boy's hand to see if it is formed on lines that indicate manual employment or professional life; and you follow the pointing of Nature with a fidelity that is almost as admirable as instinct. And yet when you find the race all fronting one way, not content to look upon the closed eyes of the dead, but turning as those disciples did who "stood gazing into the heavens" for a man who had been buried in the earth, you are not so keen to understand that the passion for immortality is a legitimate cry and must be answered.

The Only Rational Solution

ALL we know of the world is apprehended in terms of mind. Every observed thing is observed in terms of infinite space and time; and infinite space and time are just nothing in that you cannot handle them nor see them, nor subject them to the senses. Yet they are fundamental concepts in the soul. Do you tell me, then, that because the tissue disintegrates, or cells are broken down without repair that all that preceded their breaking down and sought to produce their repair has gone out of being with them? I must believe that since mind is the perceiver, mind is the exhibitor, and that since mind is the ladder by which I climb to the heights of being, there is mother-mind, mother-stuff out of which mind came, that sur-

mounts the heights and holds the ladder at the other end. This seems the only rational solution.

Secure in the Life of God

IN the finest poetry of the Hebrews, in the moment of highest exaltation and most supreme expression of religious confidence, that confidence was not that they were going to another world, but that they were secure in the life of God. If God be sure, immortality is the corollary. If God is consciously sure to my intellect, and claimed by the moral passion of my own righteousness demanding his being and life, offering its sacrifice to his beauty and perfection, then He cannot lose me out of his life. Given God, eternal life is the necessary corollary and can suffer no reduction of values nor any separation from its ultimate purpose. Living, Jesus of Nazareth said: "I am not alone, for the Father is with me;" dying, He said: "Into Thy hands I commit my spirit."

There is no Death!

THERE is nothing in the dissolution of the body to produce transformation of character. The Beatitudes were not inaugurated for the future life: they were read from the pages of the life of a Man who knew their meaning. That Carpenter of Nazareth had found out as He looked forward to the cross, the blessedness of the "pure in heart," for He had "seen God." Those Beatitudes are for today, for the Carpenter and for us; for Nazareth and for

the place you stand in now, for our building up of the life that is to come, stage by stage, as the life that now is. I can not think of God as dead, and being a living God I feel his life and He can not be rid of me if He would. I have entered into a covenant to live as long as He shall be. "God has no death to give: all live unto Him."

The Evidence of History

THE fact I want to impress upon you is this: that there is no trace of a people who had any history that does not furnish the evidence of expecting life beyond this life. There is no people, even in the time when they were afraid of the gods, who were so afraid of the gods but that they were more afraid of extinction. All religion begins in fear; and if it ends in love, then the span that rests, the one end upon this quaking pier of fear and trembling, and the other upon this immovable and fast-established pier of love, is the span of all religious experience in the spiritual world.

We do well to listen to these voices of the past. God has ordered the world on such terms that when He speaks in the only language you and I can understand, the language of the human heart and brain, we would do well to attend. There is no language other than that. If you would know what the soul of the Eternal is, hear the speech that belongs to our earth life, the speech of the gravitations of our nature that are eloquent of the will of God.

HONESTY is not a transaction, it is a state of mind.

We must not deal with an offender until we are more sorry for him than hurt ourselves.

Sin is not being up to one's best, and so, through duty to society as a sacred thing, making it harder for any one to be good.

The purpose of life is the education of the emotions in terms of reason, the passionate pursuit of righteousness.

Affection should meet in its source, not in its object. Enduring human love is impossible without love of the same things.

The expectant soul is beginning to get wisdom.

Be enamored of goodness — in love with the eternal.

To deal simply is to deal greatly.

Do not waste power on things that do not count. Have no days of unending seriousness. Let things go.

Let those who seek the responsibilities of life be humble.

We can not keep blows from falling, but we can behave well when they fall.

The best things can not be proved.

AN absorbing self-respect is the greatest and best thing in a noble soul.

When the soul really seeks, the intellect is still.

We are saved by our admirations.

God has ordained we shall have the passion to find Him.

We call God incapable, when it is we that are despairing.

Desire not safety, but growth.

We are put into the world not so much to do a certain work as to be a certain thing.

If the hands have fastened on the life line, it does not make any difference what waves pass over the soul.

Grief is the time that elapses between the blow and our adjustment to it.

The bankruptcies of life never touch the riches of the soul.

To take away the pain without the cause is anaesthesia.

When life grows complicated, God becomes infinite.

You can not believe in God and luck.

The possibility of growth imposes the obligation to grow.

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137

157

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